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Panel to discuss removal of Colangelo

Criminal Justice Commission to review case against chief state's attorney after he made controversial hire

By Edmund H. Mahony
Hartford Courant

Chief State's Attorney Richard Colangelo stuck quietly to his office Friday after a tumultuous week during which the governor called for his removal and the Criminal Justice Commission, to which he reports, began discussing how to replace him.

Colangelo, who has been the state's top prosecutor since his appointment to head the Division of Criminal Justice in February 2020, has been under intense pressure to leave office since Wednesday, when a report

commissioned by the governor's office questioned his credibility about a patronage appointment that has attracted the interest of a federal grand jury investigation of two major state spending programs.

The Criminal Justice Commission, which appointed Colangelo and has sole power over the position, scheduled a meeting for Wednesday with lawyers from the state Attorney General's office to review the laws and regulations governing removal of the chief state's attorney, a constitutional officer who cannot simply be dismissed. The commission was created as a quasi-indepen-



Colangelo

his behalf.

Colangelo has not spoken publicly about his plan — whether to resign or fight before the commission to remain in office. He did not return a call and a spokeswoman for his office declined comment. Associates said he has considered his options.

"It is a sad day for everyone involved," said

dent agency in the hope of insulating criminal prosecutions from political influence.

Among other things, a formal charge would have to be brought and Colangelo would be summoned to a hearing at which he could present witnesses on

former Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane, who preceded Colangelo in office.

That pressure to resign comes from a lengthy report commissioned by Lamont that questions Colangelo's credibility in explaining how he came to hire Anastasia Diamantis, the daughter of politically-influential former Lamont budget officer Konstantinos Diamantis — at the same time Colangelo was lobbying Diamantis for what would have amounted to pay raises for himself and his senior staff.

Colangelo has said he was pressing Diamantis to correct long-standing pay-scale irregularities in the Division of Criminal Justice that left some junior prosecutors

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HARTFORD BUSINESS INCUBATOR



Jacqueline Hylton prepares food in chef Walter Little's kitchen at the Swift Factory. MARK MIRKO PHOTOS/HARTFORD COURANT

Building dreams

At Hartford's Swift Factory, entrepreneurs find space for businesses, and it's 'just the beginning'

By Kenneth R. Gosselin
Hartford Courant

HARTFORD — Growing up in Hartford, all Walter Little knew about the M. Swift & Sons factory in the city's Northeast neighborhood was that it made gold leaf for the dome of the state Capitol.

But in the past year, Little has learned a lot more, like how a \$34 million redevelopment of the vacant, rundown factory into incubator and entrepreneurial space has given Little a chance to build a thriving restaurant business, Chef Walt's.

"It's like a dream," Little said, shaved beef and onions sizzling on the grill and a pot of jerk chicken bubbling nearby. "It gave me an opportunity that I wouldn't have had, not having the best of credit, not having parents who could back me up."

Chef Walt's space was one of a dozen stops in the renovated former gold-leaf factory on a tour Friday by U.S. Sens. Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy.

The 80,000-square-foot hub of incubator and community space, houses mostly Black-owned and women-owned businesses.

There also are plans for a new, \$5



First-floor space at the Swift Factory awaits finishing as a library.



Anastasiya Collins, left, of Hartford Plant Co. talks with Sens. Richard Blumenthal, second from left, and Chris Murphy, right.

Lawmakers urge Darien school board to reconsider Open Choice program

Democratic lawmakers are calling on the Darien Board of Education to reconsider its decision Tuesday to reject a plan to participate in a pilot Open Choice program that would have admitted 16 kindergarten students from Norwalk into four Darien elementary schools. **Connecticut, Page 1**

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DuBois-Walton to guide state education board

By Seamus McAvoy
Hartford Courant



"She has been a valuable voice as a member of the State Board of Education, utilizing her experience to bring a much-needed perspective."

— Gov. Ned Lamont, on Karen DuBois-Walton, above

Gov. Ned Lamont has appointed Karen DuBois-Walton, a New Haven leader who has championed affordable housing and equitable housing policy, as the next chairperson of the Connecticut State Board of Education, he announced Friday.

DuBois-Walton, a board member since 2020, currently serves as president of the Housing Authority of the City of New Haven, or Elm City Communities. As chair, succeeding longtime chairperson Allan B. Taylor, of Hartford, DuBois-Walton said she hopes to address the still-unfolding fallout of COVID-19 while continuing to center the equity work already underway.

"I joined a board a couple of years ago that was very oriented around how we were going to do our work through an equity lens," DuBois told the Courant. "I see my role in leadership here as being able to really push that

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Republicans rebuke Kinzinger, Cheney

Censure calls Jan. 6 attack 'legitimate political discourse'

By Jonathan Weisman and Reid J. Epstein
The New York Times

WASHINGTON — The Republican Party on Friday officially declared the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol and events that led to it "legitimate political discourse," formally rebuking two lawmakers in the party who have been most outspoken in condemning the deadly riot and the role of former President Donald Trump in spreading the election lies that fueled it.

The Republican National Committee's overwhelming voice vote to censure Reps. Liz Cheney of Wyoming and Adam Kinzinger of Illinois at its winter meeting in Salt Lake City culminated more than a year of vacillation, which started with party leaders condemning the Capitol attack and Trump's conduct, then shifted to downplaying and denying it.

On Friday, the party went further in a resolution slamming Cheney and Kinzinger for taking part in the House investigation of the assault, saying they were participating in

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Lawmakers urge Darien school board to reconsider Open Choice program

Democratic lawmakers are calling on the Darien Board of Education to reconsider its decision Tuesday to reject a plan to participate in a pilot Open Choice program that would have admitted 16 kindergarten students from Norwalk into four Darien elementary schools. **Connecticut, Page 1**

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Education

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forward as we move into our five-year plan process that's kicking off now."

Lamont hailed DuBois-Walton's work in housing equity and on the State Board of Education.

"Karen has been an incredibly active member of the New Haven community throughout her career, particularly focused on removing barriers to fair housing among marginalized communities, reversing housing segregation patterns, and making improvements in under-resourced neighborhoods," Lamont said in a statement.

"Over these last couple of years, she has been a valuable voice as a member of the State Board of Education, utilizing her experience to bring a much-needed perspective to this important body, which is why I feel that having her serve as its next chairperson is a natural fit," Lamont contin-

ued. "I appreciate Karen for accepting this responsibility and look forward to working with her on our efforts to ensure that Connecticut's public schools remain among the best in the nation and that every child has access to a top-quality education that sets them on a path to success.

Dubois-Walton, who was born in New York City and grew up upstate, first came to New Haven for undergraduate studies at Yale University. She later earned her master's degree and doctorate from Boston University, finishing at the Yale Child Study Center and going on to work with children and families as a clinical psychologist.

Her quick ascent from board member to chair is preceded by decades of public service and years of work leading New Haven's public housing authority, which she joined in 2007, as it tackled myriad development projects.

The Glendower Group, Inc., the nonprofit devel-

opment arm of Elm City Communities, has redeveloped more than 2,000 housing units through a \$650 million capital improvement program.

360 Management Group, created by Elm City in 2018 to preserve the low-income and affordable housing supply, now manages 456 units in 82 buildings in New Haven.

DuBois-Walton said one of her goals was to build and protect housing that "reflect back to the residents that we see their humanity."

"Regardless of how much you can afford to pay for your rent, you deserve something that is quality, and promotes a sense of connection and community," she said.

Under her leadership, the Connecticut State Board of Education will be tasked with creating the state's next five-year comprehensive plan for student learning.

The plan outlines the board's goals and priorities statewide and is created with input from the state

Department of Education and final approval by the board. A final draft is expected by the end of the year.

"Dr. DuBois-Walton's knowledge and experience will assist in our advancement of the board's mission," Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, state commissioner of education.

The 2016-21 plan is titled "Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students." DuBois-Walton said those tenants will remain a focus.

Meanwhile, the planning process offers a chance to explore policy changes "that can actually get us to the place where we have communities that are not racially segregated, and schools that are not racially segregated," DuBois-Walton said.

"Let's evaluate how far we got, figure what's needed to accelerate progress that's been made, or to jumpstart things that haven't gotten going yet," she said.

DuBois-Walton said she

sees several intersections between her work in public housing and public education.

About one-third of New Haven Public School students live in a unit connected to Elm City Communities, she said. The organization has long been partners with the district, she said, providing tutoring services and youth leadership development programs.

And in her fight for the expansion of affordable housing, "some of the resistance we come up against has to do with thinking about education opportunities, and school lines and districting," she said.

"When we think about some of the issues of equity and housing, about where families have the opportunity to live, housing policy and education policy are so closely connected," DuBois-Walton said.

Vinnie Mauro, chair of the New Haven Democratic Town Committee, said DuBois-Walton's leadership with Elm City Communities

has been a "steady hand" on the complex, bureaucratic organization.

"Dr. DuBois-Walton is just a truly remarkable woman; she's bright, she's caring, she's got a passion for doing the right thing," Mauro said.

"She has seen inequity, she knows what it looks like and she knows how to address it," he added. "She's constantly looking for the next best thing to do, and she'll take that approach as chair of the education board."

DuBois-Walton has also worked in the political sphere, serving as chief of staff and chief administrative officer for former New Haven Mayor John DeStefano.

She mounted a campaign against incumbent Mayor Justin Elicker in 2021, having served on his transition team in 2019, but dropped out in July ahead of the Democratic primary.

Seamus McAvoy may be reached at smcavoy@courant.com.

Censure

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"persecution of ordinary citizens engaged in legitimate political discourse."

It was an extraordinary statement about the deadliest attack on the Capitol in 200 years, in which a mob of Trump's supporters stormed the complex, brutalizing police officers and sending lawmakers into hiding. Nine people died in connection with the attack, and more than 150 officers were injured. The party passed the resolution without discussion and almost without dissent.

The censure is the latest and most forceful effort by the Republican Party to minimize what happened and the broader attempt by Trump and his allies to invalidate the results of the 2020 election. In approving it and opting to punish two of its own, Republicans seemed to embrace a position that many of them have only

hinted at: that the assault and the actions that preceded it were acceptable.

It came days after Trump suggested that, if reelected in 2024, he would consider pardons for those convicted in the Jan. 6 attack and for the first time described his goal as aiming to "overturn" the election results.

For Republicans in Washington, the party's actions threatened new division as their leaders try to focus attention on what they call the failings of the Biden administration.

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, wrote on Twitter, "Shame falls on a party that would censure persons of conscience, who seek truth in the face of vitriol. Honor attaches to Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger for seeking truth even when doing so comes at great personal cost." He did not mention that the party chair who presided over the meeting and orchestrated the censure resolution, Ronna McDaniel, is his niece.



Reps. Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger, shown in October, have been critics of Donald Trump. AL DRAGO/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The party's far-right flank has been agitating to boot Cheney and Kinzinger out of the House Republican Conference for months, a push that Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, the minority leader, has tried to brush aside. And their formal censure is sure to stir up those efforts again.

"We need to move on from that whole discussion and, frankly, move forward and

get the House back in 2022," said Rep. Mike Garcia, R-Calif., who is facing a difficult reelection campaign in a newly configured district.

Most House Republicans tried to ignore the actions of the party Friday, refusing to answer questions or saying they had not read the censure resolution. Rep. Dan Crenshaw, R-Texas, called it "dumb stuff," while Rep. Mark Green, R-Tenn.,

lamented the distraction from "this abysmal administration's record."

Democrats, however, were incensed, especially at the censure resolution's description of the Capitol attack as "ordinary citizens engaged in legitimate political discourse" and the ongoing legal investigations of Trump in New York and Georgia "as Democrat abuse of prosecutorial power."

"The Republican Party is so off the deep end now that they are describing an attempted coup and a deadly insurrection as political expression," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a member of the special House committee investigating the Capitol attack.

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., who is also on the committee, said, "Their party has degenerated into a cult to the former president, unwilling to acknowledge the truth, and I think they condemn themselves with their resolution."

In his own defense,

Kinzinger said, "I have no regrets about my decision to uphold my oath of office and defend the Constitution. I will continue to focus my efforts on standing for truth and working to fight the political matrix that's led us to where we find ourselves today."

The resolution speaks repeatedly of party unity as the goal of censuring the lawmakers, saying the party's ability to focus on the Biden administration was being "sabotaged" by the "actions and words" of Cheney and Kinzinger that indicate "they support Democrat efforts to destroy President Trump more than they support winning back a Republican majority in 2022."

Kinzinger has already announced he won't seek reelection.

Cheney, who faces an uphill battle in her reelection bid against a Republican Party aligned with Trump, said party leaders "have made themselves willing hostages" to Trump.

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FROM PAGE ONE



Bridget Quinn, foreground, president and CEO of Hartford Public Library, speaks with visitors, including Sens. Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy, inside a space at the Swift Factory, which will become a library. The 80,000-square-foot community hub and business incubator houses a majority of Black-owned and women-owned businesses. MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT

Incubator

from Page 1

million neighborhood branch of the Hartford Public Library and a branch of Chase Bank, expected to open next year, and space for Capitol Region Education Council’s Head Start programs.

For years, Little said he had worked to build a restaurant business in the neighborhood, first in a gas station on Albany Avenue, then in space at the American Legion and later at the Jerk Pit Cafe, both on Main Street.

Before coming to Swift, Little said he considered renting space that would have cost him \$2,500 a month.

“It was a closet and needed a lot of work,” Little said. “It wasn’t a state-of-the-art, walk-in opportunity like this. This gives me the room to grow.”

Little said he sealed the lease at Swift with “\$200 and handshake.” He’s now paying \$1,700 a month with a business model built around curbside delivery for patrons. Little said he has already taken on more space and is considering adding even more.

He started with just two workers — himself and a dishwasher. A year later, he now employs six.

The incubator space also is occupied by, among others, the Hartford Plant Co., a grower of micro-greens; and Bloom Bake Shop, a bakery that soon plans to move to a larger storefront downtown later this year.

Friday’s upbeat mood for the tour was years in the making, however. The Swift factory — its gold-leafing business once of national renown — closed in 2005 and was donated in 2010 to Community Solutions, a high-profile nonprofit dedicated to strengthening neighborhoods.

Construction didn’t start for eight years as Community Solutions built bridges with area residents skeptical that the redevelopment would help reverse decades of deterioration and disinvestment in the neighborhood.

There were other



Chef Walter Little takes orders for his thriving business Friday inside the Swift Factory. MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT



A file aerial of the Swift Factory in Hartford’s Northeast neighborhood. JENNA CARLESSO/HARTFORD COURANT

setbacks along the way, including Bear’s Smokehouse pulling out as an anchor tenant.

The nonprofit also had to find the right tenants and

sign leases to secure a patchwork of federal, state and local funding. A big boost came when the neighborhood became part of Hartford’s “Promise Zone.”

Rosanne Haggerty, a West Hartford native and president of Community Solutions, said Friday after the tour that there must be a better way “than slogging

it out for eight years with many different funding sources.”

Haggerty credited the neighborhood with the initial vision for Swift as a place that could provide a platform for creating jobs for local residents.

Workforce development will be a key component of the library branch. The branch will replace one on nearby Barbour Street and be more than seven times larger, at 15,000 square feet.

“With some imagination, a building that has served one purpose for over 100 years could still become the economic anchor,” Haggerty said. “But it wasn’t going to be the sole employer model anymore, the economy has shifted. The building has just surfaced so much entrepreneurial energy that existed in the community.”

Both Blumenthal and Murphy praised the redevelopment of the factory and its potential to inspire

similar future projects. They pledged to keep seeking federal funding to support the effort.

“This is tremendously impressive,” Murphy said after the tour. “We’re excited to help find federal funding. It obviously couldn’t happen without federal funding, but it really couldn’t happen without all of you.”

Neighborhood leaders who attended Friday’s tour endorsed the project as having the potential to spark further transformation in the neighborhood.

“This is the anchor, this is just the beginning,” Helen Nixon, co-chair of the Northeast Neighborhood revitalization zone, said. “I am looking forward to everything that’s happening here to be spread out all over, especially the Northeast neighborhood.”

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Colangelo

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paid more than their bosses.

Former U.S. Attorney Stanley A. Twardy Jr., who wrote the report after a six-week investigation, bluntly questioned whether Colangelo was credible in his account of how he happened to meet Anastasia Diamantis at a social event, how he immediately offered her a job and how she came to be hired. Other witnesses questioned by

Twardy disputed Colangelo’s account.

“Based on the available evidence, we do not find credible the largely consistent accounts of Mr. Colangelo, Anastasia, and Mr. Diamantis concerning how Mr. Colangelo and Anastasia first met. Our conclusion that those individuals lack credibility concerning the straightforward question of how Mr. Colangelo and Anastasia first met casts doubt on the integrity of the circumstances surrounding Anastasia’s hiring with the

Division,” the report says.

Just minutes before releasing the highly critical and much anticipated report on Colangelo on Wednesday, the Lamont administration acknowledged that the U.S. Attorney’s office had empaneled a grand jury to investigate two major state spending programs formerly under Diamantis’ control — a state pier refurbishment in New London and the state program that finances school construction. The timing of the disclosure of the grand jury investigation

left it overwhelmed by the report about Colangelo.

At the time Colangelo hired Anastasia Diamantis, she had a part-time job with a construction consultant that worked on multi-million dollar school construction projects largely financed by the state with her father’s approval.

Lamont let Diamantis go in late October, days after learning of the grand jury investigation. He hired Twardy to investigate the hiring by Colangelo of Anastasia Diamantis on Dec. 15.

Lamont demanded Colangelo’s dismissal in uncharacteristically strident language a day after making Twardy’s report public.

“When it comes to [Richard] Colangelo, I don’t hire him,” Lamont said at a press event. “I don’t fire him. But if I did he’d be gone.”

“I have zero tolerance for this type of ethical malfeasance,” the governor said. “I’m appalled and outraged at the breach of public faith. I want to hear from them (commissioners) exactly what we’re doing hiring and

holding people accountable.”

Supreme Court Justice Andrew McDonald, chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission, declined to discuss Colangelo’s future Friday. But a day earlier, he suggested Colangelo should go.

“The findings in the report are quite startling and raise profoundly serious questions about whether the Chief State’s Attorney can continue to discharge the duties of the constitutional office,” said McDonald, who voted to appoint Colangelo two years ago.

US adds 467K jobs despite omicron

Surprising growth posted after slight gain was expected

By Christopher Rugaber
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a surprising burst of hiring, America’s employers added a robust 467,000 jobs last month, a sign of the economy’s resilience in the face of a wave of omicron infections.

The government’s report Friday also drastically revised up its estimate of job gains for November and December by a combined 709,000. It also said the unemployment rate ticked up from 3.9% to a still-low 4%, mainly because more people began looking for work and not all of them found jobs right away.

The strong hiring growth for January, which defied expectations for only a slight gain, demonstrated the eagerness of many employers to hire even as the pandemic raged. Businesses appear to have regarded the omicron wave as having, at most, a temporary impact on the economy and remain confident about their longer-term prospects.

“Employers have assumed that omicron would be painful but short-term, so they haven’t changed their hiring plans,” said Mathieu Stevenson, the CEO of Snagajob, a job listings site. “Demand from employers is as strong as ever.”

January’s hiring gain and sharp upward revisions to previous months mean that the United States has 1.1 million more jobs than government data had indicated only a month ago. The solid hiring, along



A sign for a pub seeking workers is seen in the West Hollywood section of Los Angeles. **MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP 2021**

with steady wage gains, are boosting consumer spending, which has collided with snarled supply chains to accelerate inflation to a four-decade high.

Adjusted for price increases, Americans’ paychecks on average don’t go as far as they did a year ago, even though many workers have received raises. Many households, especially lower-income families, are struggling to afford necessities like gas, food, rent and child care.

Across the economy, most industries hired workers last month, including retailers, which added more than 61,000 jobs, and restaurants

and hotels, which gained 131,000. Shipping and warehousing firms added 54,000. Many companies in those industries likely held onto some of the workers they had hired over the winter holidays, economists said, rather than laying them all off.

Omicron did leave some fingerprints on the report: The percentage of Americans who were working from home rose to more than 15%, up from 11% in December. And the number of people out sick last month soared to 3.6 million, up from fewer than 2 million in the previous January and about triple the pre-

pandemic level. This forced many companies, from restaurants to retailers to manufacturers, to reduce their hours or close because of staff shortages.

Among the workers who were out sick was Perla Hernandez, whose entire family of eight contracted COVID-19 last month. Hernandez and her husband and 20-year old daughter all missed work, a major blow to the family’s finances.

Hernandez, 42, who lives in the San Jose, California, area, missed six days from her job as a Burger King cook and janitor. Because she has no paid sick leave, the paycheck she receives

every two weeks amounted to just \$230.

About one-fifth of U.S. workers receive no sick pay, and the proportion is far higher among lower-paid service workers. Only 33% of workers who are at the bottom 10% of the pay scale receive paid sick leave, compared with 95% of employees in the top 10%.

“Thank God that we already had paid the rent for January,” she said through an interpreter.

Hernandez said she earns \$15.45 an hour, after having received a 45-cent raise six months ago. But she and her colleagues, including managers, have been work-

ing especially long hours because the restaurant has had difficulty hiring.

Daniel Zhao, senior economist at the employment website Glassdoor, said the healthy hiring — not only for January but also for November and December — is a sign that last month’s gains weren’t merely a blip.

“This is an actual trend, and job growth was faster than we realized,” Zhao said.

A greater proportion of Americans are also now working or looking for work, the report showed, a trend that makes it easier for companies to find workers. It suggests that concerns about long-term labor shortages may have been overblown, at least in some industries.

Grady Cope, the CEO of Reata Engineering and Machine Works, said nine of his 43 staffers were out sick last month — the most he can remember in nearly 30 years of running the company.

But Cope’s company, which makes parts for airplane and medical device manufacturers, also has the biggest order backlog it’s ever had. He wants to add at least eight employees, including machinists, assemblers and engineers. Last month, he raised pay 18%, far more than the usual 3%-4% increases. His company is based near Denver, where rents and other costs are rising fast.

Still, Cope has been increasing his own prices to offset his workers’ higher pay. The competition for workers, he said, is the toughest he’s ever seen. In October, four of his workers quit. Only one gave notice.

“That’s never happened in 28 years,” he said.

Proposed COVID-19 panel draws bipartisan backing

Commission would be similar to the one that looked into 9/11

By Sheryl Gay Stolberg
The New York Times

WASHINGTON — A broad and bipartisan group of senators is coalescing around legislation to create a high-level independent commission, modeled after the one that examined the Sept. 11 attacks, with broad powers to investigate the origins of the coronavirus pandemic and the response across the Trump and Biden administrations.

Under a plan proposed by the top Democrat and Republican on the Senate Health Committee — Sens. Patty Murray of Washington and Richard Burr of North Carolina, respectively — a 12-member panel would have subpoena power to “get a full accounting of what went wrong during this pandemic,” Murray said, and make recommendations for the future.

The legislation, being circulated as a draft, is still in its early stages; Murray said she hopes to get feedback from colleagues within a month, followed by a hearing and a markup. In this highly polarized

environment, she and Burr acknowledged that politics could derail it.

But in interviews this week, more than a dozen senators from both parties embraced the idea, and none raised any substantive objections. More than half a dozen senators have similar proposals of their own that have produced some strange partnerships.

“I’m all for it,” declared Sen. Roger Marshall, R-Kan., a medical doctor who is working with Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and others on a similar bill. “As a doctor, if a patient dies and we don’t know why, we do an autopsy. In the military, when we have a major event we go back and figure out what we did right and what we did wrong.”

The favorable reception from members of both parties is rare in a divided Capitol, and marks a significant turnabout. Bills introduced last year in both the House and the Senate, including one by Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Bob Menendez, D-N.J., have stalled, in part because Republicans feared they would target President Donald Trump’s early failures.

But now President Joe Biden has been in office long

enough to have had failures of his own. And by explicitly stating that the origin of the pandemic must be investigated, the Murray-Burr bill appeals both to Republicans, some of whom theorize the virus emerged from a lab leak in China, and Democrats who want to put that theory to rest.

The Murray-Burr bill is carefully drafted to avoid partisan divisions. The panel would be made up of 12 “highly qualified citizens” — preferably, but not necessarily, nonpartisan subject matter experts in relevant fields like public health, manufacturing of medical products, supply chain issues and national security. They may not be government employees.

Democrats and Republicans in Congress would each appoint half the members, who would name their own chairman and vice chairman. The White House would not make any appointments. The panel would hold hearings and take testimony, as the Sept. 11 panel did, and would be expected to produce a report within a year, with a possible six-month extension.

The proposal is part of a broader measure, the Prepare for and Respond to Existing Viruses, Emerging



Sens. Richard Burr of North Carolina, left, and Patty Murray of Washington, have proposed legislation to create a COVID-19 commission. **STEFANI REYNOLDS/THE NEW YORK TIMES 2021**

New Threats and Pandemics Act — or PREVENT Pandemics Act. It would require certain changes even before an inquiry has concluded, including making the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention a Senate-confirmed position instead of serving at the will of the president.

The Biden White House has been noncommittal. Jeffrey Zients, Biden’s coronavirus response coordinator, said this week that the administration was focused on the current crisis, but

“over time we do look forward to engaging with Congress and reviewing lessons learned.”

But Dr. Anthony Fauci, Biden’s top medical adviser for the pandemic, said it was important to investigate the origins of the pandemic. He said it took years after the coronavirus that caused SARS emerged in 2002 to determine that it had almost certainly jumped from bats or civets to humans at a wet market in China. That led to greater regulation of wet markets, he said.

The 9/11 Commission,

signed into law at the end of 2002 by an initially reluctant President George W. Bush, was an independent, bipartisan panel that spent a year and a half investigating the attacks and the country’s preparedness for them, holding public hearings in what amounted to a national reckoning.

It produced an extensive report in book form — both a detailed analysis and a gripping narrative that was a surprise bestseller and changed Americans’ understanding of the attacks, which killed nearly 3,000.

Pence: Trump ‘wrong’ to say election could be overturned

By Jill Colvin
Associated Press

Former Vice President Mike Pence on Friday directly rebutted Donald Trump’s false claims that Pence somehow could have overturned the results of the 2020 election, saying that the former president was simply “wrong.”

In a speech to the conservative Federalist Society in Florida, Pence addressed Trump’s intensifying efforts this week to advance the

false narrative that he could have done something to prevent President Joe Biden from taking office.

“President Trump is wrong,” Pence said. “I had no right to overturn the election.”

While Pence in the past has defended his actions on Jan. 6, 2021, and said that he and Trump will likely never see “eye to eye” on what happened that day, the remarks Friday marked his most forceful rebuttal of Trump to date.

In a statement Tuesday, Trump said the committee investigating the attack on the Capitol should instead probe “why Mike Pence did not send back the votes for recertification or approval.” And on Sunday, he blasted Pence, falsely declaring that “he could have overturned the Election!”

Vice presidents play only a ceremonial role in the counting of Electoral College votes.

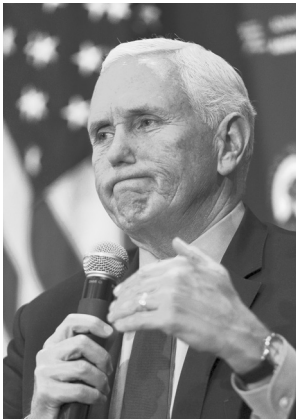
On the day of the deadly riot, Pence was presiding

over the joint session of Congress to certify the presidential election. A mob of Trump’s supporters then violently smashed inside the building, assaulting police officers and searching for lawmakers. Pence, who had released a statement earlier that day to make clear he had no authority to overturn the will of the voters, was rushed to safety as some rioters chanted “Hang Mike Pence!”

Pence told the group Friday that “the only role of

Congress with respect to the Electoral College is to open and count votes submitted and certified by the states. No more, no less.”

“Frankly there is no idea more un-American than the notion that any one person could choose the American president,” he added. “Under the Constitution, I had no right to change the outcome of our election. And Kamala Harris will have no right to overturn the election when we beat them in 2024.”



Mike Pence pushed back against ex-President Donald Trump on Friday. **MANUEL BALCE CENETA/AP 2021**

WORLD & NATION

NEWS BRIEFING

Pentagon says deadly Afghan airport attack was not preventable

From news services

WASHINGTON — The military investigation into the deadly attack during the Afghanistan evacuation has concluded that a suicide bomber, carrying 20 pounds of explosives packed with ball bearings, acted alone, and that the deaths of more than 170 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members were not preventable.

The blast on Aug. 26 at Abbey Gate at the Kabul airport killed 11 U.S. Marines, a sailor and a soldier, who were screening the thousands of Afghans frantically trying to get onto one of the crowded flights leaving the country after the Taliban takeover. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack.

At the Pentagon on Friday, military officials laid out a graphic minute-by-minute account of the bombing. The bottom line, they said, was that those who died had wounds that were “so catastrophic” that they couldn’t be overcome. And they said that earlier thoughts that it was a complex attack involving gunfire turned out to be unfounded.

“A single, explosive device killed at least 170 Afghan civilians and 13 U.S. servicemembers by explosively directing ball bearings through a packed crowd and into our men and women,” said Gen. Frank McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command. “The disturbing lethality of this device was confirmed by the 58 U.S. servicemembers who were killed and wounded despite the universal wear of body armor and helmets that did stop ball bearings that impacted them, but could not prevent catastrophic injuries to areas not covered.”

Investigators said the bomber likely got near the

gate by bypassing Taliban and other security checkpoints. They said it appears the Taliban didn’t know of the attack, that security precautions were being taken and that intelligence about potential threats that was circulating that day was not specific.

“Based upon our investigation, at the tactical level this was not preventable,” said Brig. Gen. Lance Curtis, who led the investigation. He added that military leaders on the ground in Kabul followed proper security measures, at times closing the gate or pausing the processing of evacuees.

Friday’s briefing lasted over an hour and resembled the detailed explanations military officials gave to the families of the troops killed that day. It included videos of the chaos at the gate at the time of the bombing.

Overall the U.S.-led coalition evacuated about 126,000 people in about three weeks, and the U.S. left Afghanistan at about midnight on Aug. 30.

Ahmaud Arbery trial: The man convicted of murder for shooting Ahmaud Arbery withdrew his guilty plea on a federal hate crime charge Friday, electing to stand trial for a second time in the 2020 killing of a Black man in Georgia that became part of a larger national reckoning over racial injustice.

Travis McMichael reversed his plan to plead guilty in the federal case days after a U.S. District Court judge rejected terms of a plea deal between defense attorneys and prosecutors that was met with passionate objections by Arbery’s parents.

Asked by U.S. District Judge Lisa Godbey Wood for his decision, McMichael said: “I withdraw the plea.”

That means all three



Tibet protest: Exiled Tibetans march toward the Chinese Embassy on Friday in India’s capital city of New Delhi to protest the Winter Games now underway in Beijing. Many Tibetans have been living in exile in India since their spiritual leader fled Tibet after a failed uprising in 1959. China, in turn, accuses the Dalai Lama of trying to separate Tibet from China. **ALTAF QADRI/AP**

white men convicted of Arbery’s murder will return to court for the federal trial next week, after plea deals for McMichael and his father fell apart. Greg McMichael backed down from a plan to plead guilty in a legal filing late Thursday.

Wood has scheduled jury selection in the hate crimes trial to begin Monday.

The McMichaels and a neighbor, William “Roddie” Bryan, were convicted of murder in state court last fall and sentenced to life in prison.

Dutch bridge spat: A \$500 million yacht reportedly being built for Amazon founder Jeff Bezos faces a delivery problem: It may require dismantling a historic bridge in Rotterdam that is blocking its passage to the sea.

Reports this week that the Dutch city had already agreed to take apart the recently renovated Koningshaven Bridge sparked anger. On Facebook, locals

are proposing to pelt the yacht with rotten eggs when it passes through.

However, a spokeswoman for Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb said Friday that while a shipbuilder has requested temporarily taking apart the bridge this summer, no permit has yet been sought or granted.

Celebrity lawyer convicted: Michael Avenatti was convicted Friday of charges he cheated porn actor Stormy Daniels out of nearly \$300,000 she was to get for writing a book about an alleged tryst with former President Donald Trump.

Avenatti, who acted as his own lawyer, stared straight ahead as the verdict was read.

U.S. District Judge Jesse Furman ordered Avenatti to surrender Monday to U.S. marshals in California.

Avenatti has delayed serving a 2 ½-year prison sentence for his 2020 conviction in an extortion case while waiting for the

book proceeds trial and the retrial of a fraud case in a California federal court.

Sentencing was set for May 24.

Laser strikes surge: Pilots reported a record 9,723 incidents of lasers aimed at their aircraft last year, a 41% jump over the year before.

The Federal Aviation Administration released the figures Friday, just a week after four airline flights were hit by a laser near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. All four planes landed safely.

The FAA said it handed out \$120,000 in fines for laser strikes in 2021. Fines can range up to \$11,000 for one incident and up to \$30,800 for multiple violations, and violators can face federal criminal charges.

The FAA said pilots have reported 244 injuries from laser strikes since the agency began keeping figures in 2010.

The number of laser incidents topped 1,000 in 2009 and has been rising most

years ever since.

Canada COVID-19 protest: Ontario’s Conservative premier called Friday for demonstrators to end of the “occupation” of Ottawa and police are sending 150 officers to the parts of the city most affected by the ongoing protest against COVID-19 mandates.

Police expect the protest to ramp up this weekend. Similar protests are also planned in Toronto and Quebec City.

“It’s not a protest anymore. It’s become an occupation,” Ontario Premier Doug Ford said. “It’s time for this to come to an end.”

Thousands of protesters railing against vaccine mandates and other COVID-19 restrictions descended on the capital last weekend. An estimated 250 remain, but Ottawa deputy police chief Steve Bell said 300 to 400 more trucks and over 1,000 protesters on foot are expected this weekend.



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping met Friday in Beijing, China, site of the Winter Games. **ALEXEI DRUZHININ, SPUTNIK/KREMLIN POOL PHOTO**

Putin, Xi push back against US in pre-Olympic summit

By Ken Moritsugu
Associated Press

BEIJING — The leaders of Russia and China pushed back against U.S. pressure on Friday, declaring their opposition to any expansion of NATO and affirming that the island of Taiwan is a part of China, as they met hours before the Winter Olympics kicked off in Beijing.

Russia’s Vladimir Putin and China’s Xi Jinping issued a joint statement highlighting what they called “interference in the internal affairs” of other states, as both leaders face criticism from Washington over their foreign and domestic policies.

“Some forces representing a minority on the world stage continue to advocate unilateral approaches to resolving international problems and resort to military policy,” it read, in a thinly veiled reference to the U.S. and its allies.

The two leaders are looking to project themselves as a counterweight to the U.S.-led bloc, as China shows growing support for Moscow in its dispute with Ukraine that threatens to break out into armed

conflict.

China and Russia are committed to “deepening back-to-back strategic cooperation,” Xi said to Putin, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

Faced with a “complex and evolving international situation,” the two sides “strongly support each other” in confronting what Xi called “regional security threats” and “international strategic stability,” without directly naming the U.S.

Putin is the highest-profile guest at the Beijing Games following the decision by the U.S., Britain and others not to send officials in protest of China’s human rights abuses and its treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities.

Putin praised “unprecedented” close relations with Beijing, in his opening remarks to Xi carried by Russian television, and highlighted the nations’ close economic ties. Russia has long been a key supplier of oil, gas and coal for China’s economy, now the world’s second largest.

China’s state-run news agency reported the two leaders met at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, but

gave few additional details.

Putin also recalled his presence in Beijing for the 2008 Summer Olympics, and the Chinese delegation’s attendance at Russia’s 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, calling such exchanges “to a certain extent a tradition.”

A buildup of over 100,000 Russian troops near Ukraine has fueled Western fears that Moscow is set to invade its neighbor. Russia has denied planning an offensive but urged the U.S. and its allies to pledge that NATO won’t expand to Ukraine and other ex-Soviet nations or deploy weapons there, and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe — demands rejected by the West.

Putin and Xi accused NATO and the U.S.’s Indo-Pacific strategy of building closer military ties with other Asian countries as destabilizing and threatening regional security.

“The parties oppose the further expansion of NATO, (and) call on the North Atlantic Alliance to abandon the ideological approaches of the Cold War,” the joint statement said.

Parents: Son ‘executed’ by cops on no-knock warrant in Minn.

By Steve Karnowski
and Amy Forliti
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The parents of Amir Locke and their attorneys said Friday that the 22-year-old Black man was “executed” by a Minneapolis SWAT team that woke him from a deep sleep, and that he reached in confusion for a legal firearm to protect himself.

Locke’s parents, Andre Locke and Karen Wells, described him as respectful, including to police, and said some of their relatives work in law enforcement. Wells said the couple coached their son on how to act and do “what they needed to do whenever they encountered police officers” because of the danger to “unarmed Black males.”

“My son was executed on 2/2 of 22,” Wells said. “And now his dreams have been destroyed.”

The parents spoke at a news conference organized by civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who said Locke’s family was “just flabbergasted at the fact that Amir was killed in this way” and disgusted at how the Wednesday morning raid was conducted. They said he was law-abiding, with no criminal record, and had a permit to carry a gun.

“They didn’t even give him a chance,” Crump said, adding that it was shocking that Minneapolis police had not learned from the death of Breonna Taylor, who was killed in a botched raid at her home in Louisville, Kentucky, in 2020, leading to calls for an end to no-knock warrants nationwide.

Police said Locke pointed a loaded gun “in the direction of officers.” An incident report said he had two wounds in the chest and one in the right wrist.

The killing prompted outrage in Minneapolis, where prominent activists confronted the mayor and



Police at the scene Wednesday where Amir Locke was killed while holding a gun after officers raided a Minneapolis apartment. **RICHARD TSONG-TAATARI/STAR TRIBUNE**

interim police chief at a news conference Thursday.

Body camera video released by police Thursday evening shows the footage in slow motion and at regular speed. It shows an officer using a key to unlock the door and enter, followed by at least four officers in uniform and protective vests, time-stamped at 6:48 a.m. After they open the door, they repeatedly shout, “Police, search warrant!” They also shout “Hands!” and “Get on the ground!” The video shows an officer kick a sectional sofa, and Locke, who was wrapped in a comforter on the sofa, begins to move, holding a pistol. Three shots are heard, and the video ends.

The city also released a still from the video showing Locke holding the gun, his trigger finger along the side of the barrel. Otherwise, all that can be seen of Locke is the top of his head.

Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman said he asked Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison to help review the case for possible charges. Ellison’s office led prosecutions of former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin in George Floyd’s killing and of former Brooklyn Center Officer Kim Potter in the shooting of Black motorist Daunte Wright.

Interim Police Chief Amelia Huffman said during a news conference Thursday that Locke wasn’t named in the warrants. She said it wasn’t clear how or whether Locke was connected to a homicide investigation in St. Paul.

The search warrants that led the SWAT team to enter the apartment early Wednesday were still not public as of Friday morning. But a search warrant filed by state agents investigating the shooting was provided. It said the initial search warrants “were being executed for a homicide suspect who was apparently located” at the building where the shooting took place.

Huffman said the officer, Mark Hanneman, was in a difficult position.

“The still shot shows the image of the firearm in the subject’s hands, at the best possible moment when the lighting was fully on him. That’s the moment when the officer had to make a split-second decision to assess the circumstances and to determine whether he felt like there was an articulable threat, that the threat was of imminent harm, great bodily harm or death, and that he needed to take action right then to protect himself and his partners,” she said.

BUSINESS

COURANT.COM/BUSINESS

House OKs bill boosting domestic chip production

Democrats believe legislation puts US in better position to compete with China

By Kevin Freking
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats muscled through legislation in the House on Friday that they say positions the United States to better compete with China economically and on the global stage by strengthening the domestic semiconductor industry and shoring up strained supply chains.

The bill passed by a vote of 222-210. It marks an important step for a top Biden administration priority, but the legislation is likely to be extensively revised as negotiators reconcile differences with what the Senate passed about eight months ago.

Criticizing China has become a bipartisan playbook in Washington. Republicans panned the measure as “toothless” and short of what is needed to hold the country accountable for a range of economic and human rights actions.

The nearly 3,000-page bill, not counting scores of amendments added this week, includes massive investments designed to boost semiconductor manufacturing in the

U.S. The big-ticket items include about \$52 billion in grants and subsidies to help the semiconductor industry and \$45 billion to strengthen supply chains for high-tech products.

But Democrats also tucked in other priorities that have raised GOP concerns about the bill’s cost and scope. Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois was the only Republican to vote for the measure, while Rep. Stephanie Murphy of Florida was the only Democrat to vote against it.

The bill includes \$8 billion for a fund that helps developing countries adjust to climate change; \$3 billion for facilities to make the U.S. less reliant on Chinese solar components; \$4 billion to help communities with significantly higher unemployment than the national average; and \$10.5 billion for states to stockpile drugs and medical equipment.

Democrats were in a celebratory mood prior to the vote after the latest jobs report showed employers added 467,000 jobs in January. They said the legislation would lead to more good news on that front.

“The bill we’re talking about today is a jobs bill, a jobs bill for manufacturing in America, for making it in America,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

The bill gives Democrats a chance to address voter concerns about the economy at a time when a shortage of computer chips has led to higher prices for automobiles, electronics and medical devices. To show his administration is addressing inflation concerns, President Joe Biden highlighted the vote at a White House event Friday and reminded Americans of Intel’s announcement two weeks ago that it would be building two computer chip production plants in Ohio.

Republicans, who for months have hammered Democrats over rising inflation, say the bill has little to do with winning the economic competition with China and wastes taxpayer dollars on environmental initiatives and other unnecessary programs.

“This bill is actually just a long list of progressive dream policies that have nothing to do with China at all,” said Rep. Michelle Fischbach, R-Minn.

Trump-era solar tariffs extended, modified

By Matthew Daly
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Friday extended tariffs imposed by former President Donald Trump on most solar panels imported from China and other countries. But in a nod to his efforts to combat climate change and boost clean energy, Biden excluded tariffs on some panels used in large-scale utility projects.

Biden said he will continue for four more years tariffs imposed by Trump on imported solar cells and panels, but he exempted so-called bifacial solar panels that can generate electricity on both sides and are now used in many large solar projects. The technology was still emerging when the tariffs were first imposed by Trump in 2018.

“By excluding bifacial panels, we will ensure that solar deployment continues at the pace and scale needed to meet the president’s ambitious climate and clean energy targets and create good jobs at home,” Biden said in a statement. Along with clean-energy provisions in his still-stalled “Build Back Better” initiative, the actions on solar power “will enable us to rebuild a sustainable, competitive and technologically-advanced domestic solar industry,” Biden said.

Biden also doubled an import quota on solar cells — the main components of panels that go on rooftops and utility sites — to 5 gigawatts, allowing a greater number of imported cells used by domestic manufacturers.

The U.S. does not currently produce solar cells, and the administration wants to make sure domestic suppliers “do not have to pay a tariff on a key input for their manufacturing process,” a senior administration official said Friday.

The cells come from places like Vietnam or Malaysia — not China, the official said.



Darin Mays, a former health care software executive, now sells his woodwork on the e-commerce site Etsy. PATRICK MCCUTCHAN/MSPEXCITE

Start-up boom going strong

Pandemic opens up chances for would-be entrepreneurs to try and make it on own

By Mae Anderson
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The number of Americans looking to start their own business is on the rise, as the coronavirus pandemic creates opportunities for some would-be entrepreneurs.

There were 5.4 million applications for business tax identification numbers filed in 2021, according to the Census Bureau, surpassing the previous peak in 2020 of 4.4 million. In 2019, pre-pandemic, there were 3.5 million new business applications. The applications don’t necessarily mean businesses were launched, but the numbers do show that people were considering starting companies despite the virus’s impact on the economy.

Darin Mays of Minneapolis had been a health care software executive for 15 years when the pandemic came and the project he was working on ended. Mays could have accepted a different assignment but decided to leave instead.

While living on his severance package,

he made a table that encircles a patio heater for a neighbor, who soon hosted a cook-out. “Everyone said this table is great, you should throw it on Etsy,” He did and sold his first one about a week later.

Mays, 38, has a patent pending for his table designs, and he also sells other woodwork at his Etsy store, Urban Wing Co. The shop took in six figures in revenue in 2021, he said, and he’s thinking about expanding.

“The pandemic, as much as it’s been awful, has been an opportunity for innovation,” he said.

For Kelly Van Arsdale, 32, a pandemic-related relocation and a fortuitous stroll past a well-located storefront were keys to starting his business.

Van Arsdale was a freelance web developer in San Francisco when the pandemic hit. He and his wife decided to move to Seattle in August 2020, where they could afford more space and be closer to his parents.

During his time in San Francisco, Van Arsdale and his brother had been making chocolate in their garage and giving bars to friends and family. While walking in his North Seattle neighborhood last April, he happened upon an unoccupied storefront that had room for chocolate production. He leased the space, built it out and founded

Spinnaker Chocolate in October.

His neighbors were early customers. But reaching a broader clientele online has been harder.

“The pandemic pushed a ton of businesses online, and it’s now more expensive than ever to run any amount of advertising,” he said. “Overall, the hardest challenge has been spreading awareness of our brand.”

Elyssa Heller worked in the food and beverage business for 10 years, and was working for a vegan snack company at the start of the pandemic, but wanted to try out her own concept focused on Jewish comfort food.

Heller, 32, initially had success with a bagel pop-up at the popular pizzeria Paulie Gee’s in Brooklyn in 2020. The pop-up concept blossomed in many states as the pandemic either forced limited seating or closed dining rooms altogether.

She eventually opened a sandwich counter in March 2021, and a restaurant, Edith’s Eatery & Grocery, in January.

“The New York dining scene was always very exclusive,” she said. Before the pandemic, “there weren’t vacancies and affordable rent options. Someone like me that didn’t have a name in the restaurant space normally wouldn’t have access to the talent I was able to hire.”

BUSINESS BRIEFING

EU, US to trade mollusks again

BRUSSELS — The European Union and the United States have agreed to resume trade in oysters, clams, mussels and scallops starting at the end of February, settling a 10-year trade dispute.

Trade in live mollusks between the EU and the U.S. had stopped in 2011 due to a divide in regulatory standards.

Under the deal announced Friday, two EU member countries — Spain and the Netherlands — will be allowed to export mollusks to the U.S., while the American states of Massachusetts and Washington can now trade to the EU.

The EU said that other member countries could join the agreement and be allowed to export mollusks to the U.S. under a simplified authorization procedure.

Norway’s bank taps NATO chief

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg will become Norway’s next central bank governor, officials said Friday.

Stoltenberg’s tenure at NATO ends later this year. Norway’s government announced his appointment at the central bank in a statement and said it hopes he can start in his new role around Dec. 1.

The current governor of Norges Bank, 70-year-old Oystein Olsen, is retiring this year after holding the position since Jan. 1, 2011.

Stoltenberg, 62, was Norway’s finance minister from 1996 to 2000, and prime minister from 2000 to 2001 and again from 2005 until 2013. He became NATO secretary-general in 2014.

ANALYSIS

Surprising jobs report provides talking point

By Jeanna Smialek
The New York Times

January’s surprisingly strong job gains and wage growth handed the White House a win to talk about at a moment when consumers are unsure about the economy, and will likely make it easier for the Federal Reserve to explain why it is poised to raise interest rates.

But those big numbers could also stoke fears that economic policymakers have an even more urgent inflation problem on their hands, and will fuel Wall Street speculation that the Fed could go bigger and faster in removing its economic help in a bid to choke off price pressures.

Employers added 467,000 jobs instead of the lackluster 125,000 analysts had expected amid the virus surge. Unemployment ticked up, but wage growth came in very strong — average hourly earnings were 5.7% higher than a year earlier, a full percentage point faster than economists had expected.

President Joe Biden and his advisers are pointing to the strong data as evidence that his administration’s economic policies are working. Pay gains are robust, workers are finding opportunities and labor has power in today’s job market. Revisions to last year’s job numbers showed that progress was even faster than previously reported.

But the fact that wages are surging so

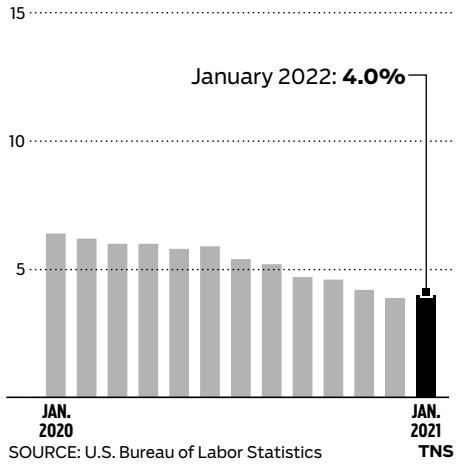
quickly could also increase fears that companies will lift prices to cover their rising labor costs, exacerbating inflation.

That is likely to turn all eyes toward the Fed. Chairman Jerome Powell and his colleagues are poised to raise interest rates for the first time since 2018 at their next meeting in March, a move meant to cool off the economy as inflation runs at its fastest pace in nearly 40 years.

Officials had expected to find themselves in the uncomfortable position of making that move, and signaling what comes next, at a time when the latest job market data looked a little bleak. Instead, they will be doing it at a moment when both price gains and wage growth appear heady.

Jobless rate

Percent of civilian labor force that is unemployed, by month, seasonally adjusted



BUSINESS



Texas is one of five states eligible for a large share of funding from the Interior Department to cap abandoned oil and gas wells. Above, a pumpjack near Refugio, Texas. ERIC GAY/AP 2021

Interior OKs more than \$1B to clean up abandoned wells

By Drew Costley
Associated Press

The Department of Interior is spending \$1.15 billion to cap abandoned oil and gas wells across the United States.

There are over 3 million abandoned oil and gas wells in the U.S., according to the Environmental Protection Agency. And Interior officials say that wells have been exposing millions of people to air and water pollution for decades.

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said in a statement this week that the funding will help the country “confront the legacy pollution and long-standing environmental injustices that for too long have plagued underrepresented communities.”

Much of the funding is focused on plugging wells in communities of color and in rural and tribal communities.

The funds are coming from \$4.7 billion set aside from the bipartisan infrastruc-

ture bill. Officials hope the cleanup effort also will result in other positive developments.

“We’re particularly excited about these investments because they will be job creators,” said Winnie Stachelberg, infrastructure coordinator at Interior. “In addition to creating immediate jobs addressing the pollution, these investments will build a foundation for future job growth once sites are cleaned up.”

Texas, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Oklahoma and California — states an Associated Press examination found have among the most abandoned wells — are eligible to get the largest shares of funding from the \$1.15 billion.

States will have to apply for funding set aside for well cleanup. The Interior Department said nearly every state with documented abandoned wells expressed interest in applying.

Abandoned wells are a growing problem around

the U.S. as oil and gas companies leave them behind and communities shift away from fossil fuel production. About two-thirds of the millions of the abandoned wells haven’t been plugged, and many are releasing methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

In California, which has 4,844 documented abandoned wells, there is a statewide push to shift away from fossil fuel production.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has pledged to phase out oil and gas drilling in the state completely by 2045. Last week, the Los Angeles City Council voted to ban new oil and gas drilling and phase out hundreds of existing wells.

Decades of well abandonment in states such as California, Texas and Pennsylvania — along with industry and government plans to shut down more wells — have left communities around the country scrambling to figure out how to clean up well sites.

Military tech at sea allows US foes to sidestep sanctions

By Joshua Goodman
Associated Press

MIAMI — Technology to hide a ship’s location previously available only to the world’s militaries is spreading fast through the global maritime industry as governments from Iran to Venezuela — and the rogue shipping companies they depend on to move their petroleum products — look for stealthier ways to circumvent U.S. sanctions.

Windward, a maritime intelligence company whose data is used by the U.S. government to investigate sanctions violations, said that since January 2020 it has detected more than 200 vessels involved in over 350 incidents in which they appear to have electronically manipulated their GPS location.

“This is out of hand right now,” said Matan Peled, co-founder of Windward and a former Israeli naval officer. “It’s not driven by countries or superpowers. It’s ordinary companies using this technique.”

Peled said U.S. authorities have been slow to catch on to the spread of technology that has been part of the electronic warfare arsenal for decades but is only now cropping up in commercial shipping, with serious national security, environmental and maritime safety implications.

Windward was able to identify suspect ships using technology that detects digital tracks that don’t correspond to actual movements, such as hairpin turns at breakneck speed or drifting in the form of perfect crop circles.

William Fallon, a retired four-star admiral and former head of the U.S. Pacific Command, said U.S. authorities have been aware for some time of the threat from electronic manipulation, one of a growing



Technology used to hide a ship’s location and previously available only to the world’s militaries is spreading through the global maritime industry. JON GAMBRELL/AP 2021

number of so-called gray zone national security challenges that cut across traditional military, commercial and economic lines.

One of the more egregious examples found by Windward involves an oil tanker that could be tracked sailing to Iraq even as it was in reality loading crude in Iran, which is banned from selling its oil by U.S. sanctions.

The tanker, whose name Windward asked to be withheld so as not to disrupt any potential U.S. government investigation, set sail Feb. 11, 2021, from the United Arab Emirates, reporting its destination as Basra, Iraq.

When it was 20 nautical miles away, its global navigation system began exhibiting strange drifting patterns.

Twelve days later, its transmission stabilized and it could be tracked heading back through the Hormuz strait at normal sailing speed, this time fully laden with crude.

Satellite imagery shows that during the two-week voyage a ship of identical length and with the same red deck broken up by a white pole and bridge was spotted dozens of nautical miles away, in Iran’s Kharg Island oil terminal.

That vessel was then followed on satellite sailing back to the UAE, its course merging with the reported position of the original ship after it resumed its normal transmission.

Under a United Nations maritime treaty, ships of over 300 tons have been required since 2004 to use an automated identification system to avoid collisions and assist rescues in the event of a spill or accident at sea.

Tampering with its use is a major breach that can lead to official sanctions for a vessel and its owners.

But what was intended as an at-sea safety mechanism has also driven a proliferation in ship-spotting platforms like MarineTraffic.com.

Experts say such websites can be easily tricked since they partly rely on data gathered from thousands of amateur base stations that function like police radio scanners picking up maritime movements.

Last year, two journalists from the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation managed to register online a fake base station near Somalia and insert the false coordinates of a real vessel.

Seconds later, the falsified location popped up on MarineTraffic.com.

MARKET RUNDOWN			
Saturday, February 5, 2022			
↓ DOW	10-YR T-BOND	↑ GOLD	
35,089.74 -21.42	1.93% +.11	\$1,806.60 +3.60	
Commodities			
FUELS			
Crude Oil (bbl)	CLOSE 92.31	PREV. 90.27	YTD +22.74%
Natural Gas (mm btu)	4.57	4.89	+22.57%
Unleaded Gas (gal)	2.68	2.64	+20.20%
METALS			
Gold (oz)	1,806.60	1,803.00	-1.14%
Silver (oz)	22.48	22.38	-3.66%
(Previous and change figures reflect current contract.)			
Foreign Exchange			
	ForEx in U.S. \$	U.S. \$ in ForEx	
Britain	1.3530	1.7391	
Canada	.7841	1.2753	
China	.1572	6.3610	
Euro	1.1448	.8735	
Japan	.008676	115.27	
Mexico	.048371	20.6735	
Money Rates			
		CLOSE	PREV. WK.
Prime rate		3.25	3.25
3-mo. T-Bill		0.23	0.19
6-mo. T-Bill		0.55	0.44
5-yr T-Note		1.78	1.61
10-yr T-Note		1.93	1.77
30-yr T-Bond		2.23	2.08
Global Markets			
	CLOSE	CHG.	%CHG. %YTD
Frankfurt	15,099.56	-268.91	-1.75% -4.94%
London	7,516.40	-12.44	-1.7% +1.79%
Hong Kong	24,573.29	+771.03	+3.24% +5.02%
Nikkei	27,439.99	+198.68	+0.73% -4.69%

Stocks of Local Interest			
STOCK (TICKER)	CLOSE	CHG.	YTD %CHG
ALJ Regional Holdings (ALJJ)	2.14	+.31	+17.6
AMC Entertainment A (AMC)	15.35	+.48	+43.6
AT&T Inc (T)	24.08	-.48	-2.1
Adv Micro Dev (AMD)	123.60	+3.52	+14.1
American Airlines Gp (AAL)	16.45	-.12	-8.4
Amphenol Corp (APH)	78.76	-.31	-9.9
Annaly Capital Mgmt (NLY)	7.57	-.05	-3.2
Apple Inc (AAPL)	172.39	-.29	-2.9
Avangrid Inc (AGR)	45.50	-.53	-8.8
Bank of America (BAC)	48.28	+1.85	+8.5
Barnes Group (B)	44.61	-.66	-4.2
Booking Holdings (BKNG)	2442.93	+5.41	+1.8
Brist Myr Sqb (BMY)	64.99	+.92	+4.2
CVS Health Corp (CVS)	108.49	-.23	+5.2
Carnival Corp (CCL)	19.96	-.38	-.8
Carrier Global Corp (CARR)	45.84	-.40	-15.5
Charter Communic (CHTR)	608.92	-1.53	-6.6
Cigna Corp (CI)	221.37	+3.81	-3.6
Citigroup (C)	66.08	+1.33	+9.4
Comcast Corp A (CMCSA)	49.33	-.31	-2.0
DiDi Global Inc (DIDI)	3.42	-.14	-31.3
Disney (DIS)	142.02	+1.99	-8.3
EMCOR Group Inc (EME)	116.31	+.67	-8.7
Energy Transfer L.P. (ET)	10.24	...	+24.4
Ethan Allen (ETD)	25.28	+.08	-3.8
Eversource Energy (ES)	87.74	-.33	-3.6
Exela Technologies (XELA)	.81	+.02	-7.9
Exxon Mobil Corp (XOM)	81.41	+1.73	+33.0
Ford Motor (F)	17.96	-1.93	-13.5
FuelCell Energy (FCEL)	4.28	+.21	-17.7
Gen Dynamics (GD)	212.29	+1.12	+1.8
Gen Electric (GE)	99.01	+.69	+4.8
General Motors Co (GM)	51.29	-1.82	-12.5
Hartford F'n Sv (HIG)	70.52	-1.67	+2.1
Honeywell Intl (HON)	191.50	-.24	-8.2
Horizon Tech Fin (HRZN)	15.61	-.03	-1.9
Infosys Ltd (INFY)	22.89	+.13	-9.6
Intel Corp (INTC)	48.01	+.10	-6.8
Kaman (KAMN)	39.44	-.17	-8.6
Keycorp (KEY)	26.17	+.56	+13.1
Lincoln Natl Corp (LNC)	71.55	+4.29	+4.8
MGM Resorts Intl (MGM)	44.54	+1.56	-.8
Marathon Oil (MRO)	21.50	+.66	+30.9
Meta Platforms Inc (FB)	237.09	-.67	-29.5
MetLife Inc (MET)	68.99	+1.26	+10.4
Microsoft Corp (MSFT)	305.94	+4.69	-9.0
Novartis AG (NVS)	86.28	-.14	-1.4
Nvidia Corporation (NVDA)	243.19	+3.71	-17.3
Occid Petl (OXY)	40.80	+.80	+40.7
Otis Worldwide Corp (OTIS)	82.44	+.59	-5.3
PG&E Corp (PCG)	12.08	+.07	-.5
Palantir Technol (PLTR)	12.94	+.49	-28.9
PayPal Holdings (PYPL)	126.08	+1.78	-33.1
Peoples Utd Fncl (PBCT)	20.59	+.65	+15.5
Pfizer Inc (PFE)	53.00	-.38	-10.2
Pinterest Inc (PINS)	27.25	+2.74	-25.0
Pitney Bowes (PBI)	4.78	-.03	-27.9
Prudential Fncl (PRU)	118.34	+4.95	+9.3
Pub Svc Ent Gp (PEG)	66.64	-.45	-.1
Raytheon Technolog (RTX)	93.01	+.20	+8.1
Robinhood Markets A (HOOD)	15.18	+1.03	-14.5
Rogers Corp (ROG)	272.50	-.12	-2.2
SS&C Technologies (SSNC)	80.34	+.41	-2.0
Snap Inc A (SNAP)	38.91	+14.41	-17.3
SoFi Technologies (SOFI)	11.89	+.32	-24.8
Sthwstn Energy (SWN)	4.67	+.12	+2.2
Sphere 3D Corp (ANY)	3.03	+.72	-2.9
Stanley Black & Deck (SWK)	166.47	-7.89	-11.7
Starwood Prop Trust (STWD)	24.42	+.01	+.5
Sundial Growers Inc (SNDL)	.53	+.05	-8.3
Terex Corp (TEX)	40.97	-.94	-6.8
Tesla Inc (TSLA)	923.32	+32.18	-12.6
Transocean Ltd (RIG)	3.78	+.32	+37.0
Travelers Cos (TRV)	171.90	-.17	+9.9
Twitter Inc (TWTR)	36.94	+2.46	-14.5
Uber Technologies (UBER)	37.05	+2.51	-11.6
United Rentals (URI)	312.29	-12.14	-6.0
UnitedHealth Group (UNH)	483.17	-5.60	-3.8
Virtus Invest (VRTS)	269.50	+19.06	-9.3
Voya Financial (VOYA)	70.31	+1.47	+6.0
Webster Financial (WBS)	60.78	+1.57	+8.8
Wells Fargo & Co (WFC)	56.33	+1.16	+17.4
White Mtns Insur (WTM)	1044.28	-10.76	+3.0
World Wrestling Ent (WWE)	51.71	+3.90	+4.8
XPO Logistics Inc (XPO)	63.64	-1.88	-17.8
Xerox Holdings Corp (XRX)	22.04	+.10	-2.7
Zynga Inc (ZNGA)	9.11	+.05	+42.3



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OPINION

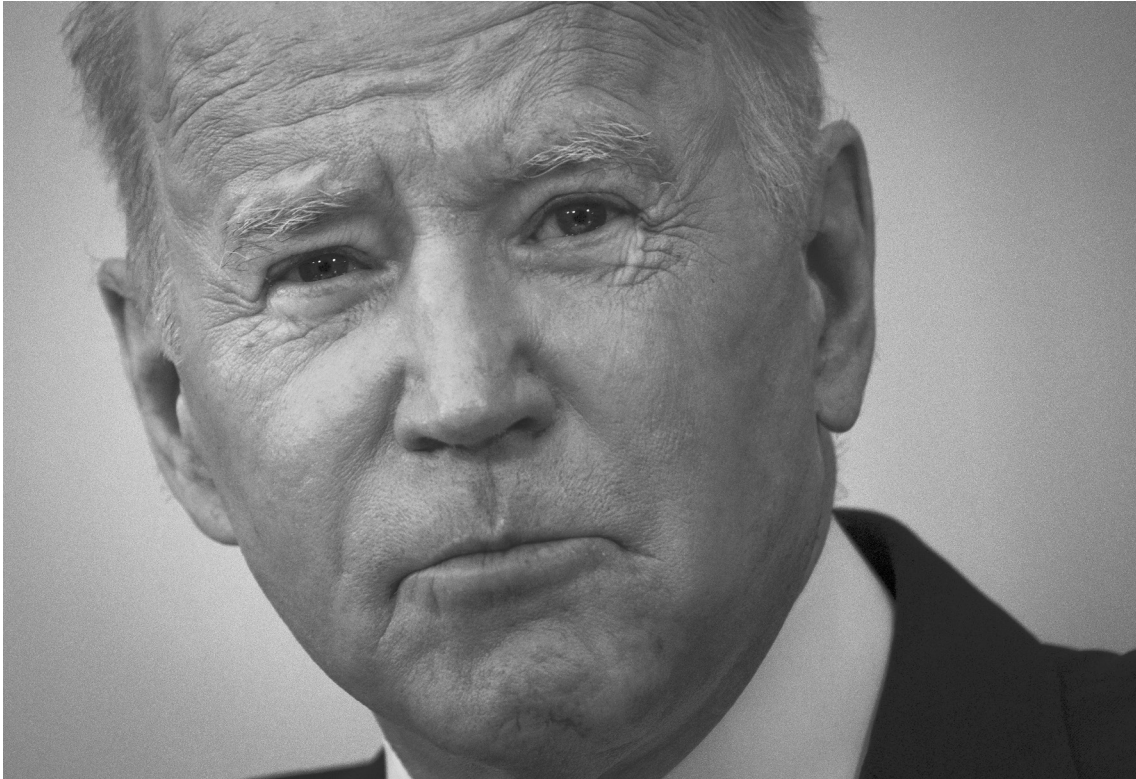
COURANT.COM/OPINION

OP-ED

Proto is wrong about Biden’s guidance

By Ethan Frankel

Ben Proto’s op-ed in Tuesday’s Hartford Courant must have been written in some parallel universe [Opinion, Page 10, “Are we better off after Biden’s first year?”]. Ben starts out writing, “As one crisis after another spirals,” and I thought for sure he was talking about the four years we spent with a Donald Trump presidency. The “strong economic recovery” must surely be the one taking place since Joe Biden became president, as the jobless rate when Biden came to office was 6.2% and it is now 4.2%. I am pretty sure the creation of 4.1 million jobs does not represent the “destruction of our economy.” Do you think the current inflation rate has anything to do with Americans’ huge demand to buy things? Our economy is doing so badly that the world cannot make enough stuff for Americans to buy. The pandemic slowed production and we went on a buying spree for everything from toilet paper to Teslas. The crisis he is talking about has to be the crisis Biden inherited with more than 400,000 already dead from COVID-19, which Trump refused to recog-



President Joe Biden speaks during a meeting with private sector CEOs on Jan. 26 in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington, D.C. **DREW ANGERER/GETTY**

nize. Was an attempt to forcibly reverse the outcome of the election a crisis or is Biden’s work to piece the country back together again a crisis? Was denying the need for vaccinations a crisis or was getting 200 million Americans vaccinated the crisis? Still trying to figure out which crisis

he is referring to. Maybe it is Biden’s effort to provide billions in aid to those who need it the most. The latest crisis could be the actual concrete proposal to fund repair of our infrastructure rather than just funding a steel wall designed to make sure no foreign workers come into this country to do the jobs that nobody else is willing to do. Apparently, efforts to address climate change rather than denying it is the spiraling crisis. Ben Proto cites Biden’s inability to “stand up to Putin!” I guess he means stand up to Vladimir Putin the way the former president stood up to Putin? Perhaps that would mean praising him and emulating him. Clearly, Biden has to strengthen criminal justice and support the police like Trump did as long as they aren’t trying to defend the U.S. Capitol from a mob trying to reverse the will of the people. Does truth and reality still exist? The answer to Ben’s question, “Are we better off after Biden’s first year?” Depends on whether or not Americans want to believe lies or believe in reality.

Ethan Frankel lives in West Hartford.

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Living Here: What is it really like to live in Connecticut?

We welcome all submissions and will publish the best. We especially look for younger writers and those whose voices aren’t heard often enough. Essays should be 600-700 words, written in the first person and emailed to oped@courant.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UConn inept at managing athletic program

It was with shock and disbelief that I read the statement from UConn, “The arbitrator’s decision is nonsensical and seriously impedes the University’s ability to manage its athletics program [Page 1, Jan. 21, “Ollie wins arbitration case”].

What is nonsensical is that people at UConn would actually make the statement defending what it calls its “ability to manage” its athletic program.

Dan Lacy, South Windsor

Nurses, ICU staff will say we aren’t on ‘downslope’

Yet another misleading headline in The Courant — “Weekly test positivity rate drops again to 16%” [Connecticut, Page 1, Jan. 22]. Nothing about this is good. It fuels yet another uptick because of false promises that this pandemic will end and we don’t have to be careful any longer.

As long as there are anti-vaxxers/anti-maskers among us fueling it, there will be no end to this pandemic.

The facts that 241 more people have died and there are still crowded hospitals (beds occupied mostly by anti-vaxxers) and stressed hospital workers are not facts worthy of your misleading headline.

Dr. Ulysses Wu says we are “well into our downslope.” Perhaps Dr. Wu should ask nurses and other staff in the ICU what they think, and maybe how they feel. Also, there are thousands of positive home tests not being included in these statistics. We all wish for this pandemic to be over, but false hope is not the way for it to happen.

Joan McQuillan, Glastonbury

UConn women set precedent for lopsided scores

Regarding the high school basketball mismatch (final score: 92-4): I felt somewhat prepared.

Season after season, the UConn women have mowed down opponents by 50 points and more. In 2018 they put up 140 points against St. Francis, winning by 88. And years back the Huskies pounded Quinnipiac 117-20. Victory streaks stretch past 100 games, and the White House celebrates the mastery. So, despite winner’s remorse in the current case, my guess would be that anyone drawn to competition is bound to recall, “Yeah, we got killed.” It happens.

Dur Seible, Durham

Letter writer got facts wrong on COVID

What is the purpose of printing a letter to the editor [“Antibody tests more efficient than boosters”] that spreads misinformation about COVID-19 when scientists, doctors and public health officials are working so hard to counter exactly this type of misinformation?

Writer Pat Schmidt claims the vaccine “does not protect you from the virus.” This is false. For the week beginning Jan. 9 in Connecticut, unvaccinated people were 13.4 times more likely to die from COVID as vaccinated people. Schmidt asks why you would get a vaccine if you have natural immunity. Science has shown that immunity from vaccination is better than immunity acquired from infection, and vaccination after infection is even more protective.

Finally, the writer touts a blood test that costs \$75. Vaccines are free. Please don’t give a platform for this misinformation to spread. Readers — listen to the doctors and scientists. Get vaccinated and boosted.

Sarah Burns, Farmington

OP-ED

Challenge GOP’s politics of evasion on Trump



E.J. Dionne Jr.

Although Donald Trump has hovered over American politics since leaving office, most voters saw him as yesterday’s news. Now, he’s very much today’s news, and — thanks to the accelerating pace of the House’s Jan. 6 inquiry — tomorrow’s. This should change the trajectory of this year’s midterm election politics.

Democrats did well in 2018 and 2020, when a significant share of the electorate thought the survival of our democracy was on the ballot. Democrats need to put democracy on the ballot again this year.

Trump served the Republican Party well as a visible but limited presence. He agitated his base, keeping his supporters active and engaged. This helped produce high turnouts for Republican candidates in Virginia and New Jersey this past fall.

Meanwhile, the bulk of the electorate was focused on prices and the ongoing pandemic, to the disadvantage of President Joe Biden and his party. This allowed Republicans — Virginia’s new governor, Glenn Youngkin, is the prime example — to profit from Trumpism without being forced to stand firmly against the former president’s lies about the 2020 election or his abuses of office.

Now, the urgent need to shake a widespread complacency about our governing institutions has been brought home by the work of journalists and the House select committee investigating Jan. 6. Trump has done his bit, too.

Trump said the subversive part out loud on Sunday when he declared that his vice president, Mike Pence, “could have overturned the election.” This acknowledged outright what Trump’s real goal was. The day before, Trump dangled the prospect of pardons for those convicted over the Jan. 6



Former President Donald Trump speaks Jan. 29 in Conroe, Texas. “If I run and I win, we will treat those people from Jan. 6 fairly,” he told supporters at the rally. “And if it requires pardons, we will give them pardons because they are being treated so unfairly.” **JASON FOCHTMAN/AP**

attack if he were returned to office.

In a rerun of his eagerness to use mobs to advance his interests, he called for “the biggest protests we have ever had” if prosecutors in New York and Atlanta act against him. And the New York Times reported this week that, while president, Trump directed his personal lawyer Rudolph W. Giuliani to explore whether the Department of Homeland Security or the Justice Department could legally take control of voting machines in swing states.

The stakes here involve not just what Trump did but also what Republicans might be preparing to do in 2022 and 2024. Trump is pushing to elect secretaries of state and governors who endorse his lies about 2020 and would be willing to politicize the process of counting ballots.

Already, more than a dozen Republican-controlled states have rolled back ballot access.

So why are Democrats not shouting from the rooftops about the need to protect democracy? One reason political consultants advance: Democracy issues are a tough sell with most voters, who are far more invested in their day-to-day problems than in a former president or a threat that still feels abstract.

“Making democracy a front-and-center issue is in competition with the malaise people feel over the economy, even if there’s a lot of good news about the economy,” Democratic pollster Anna Greenberg said in an interview. Voters, she added, “look at Jan. 6 as something of a stand-alone event.”

In contrast to 2018 and 2020, said Stephanie Cutter, a longtime Democratic consultant who worked in the Obama administration, “in 2022, the threat of Trump will not be enough to make suburban women vote Democratic.”

We’re living in a classic case of the Political Consultants Dilemma. Candidates are urged to take a pass on important — and potentially beneficial — issues because they are secondary or tertiary to key voting groups. Yet the only chance such issues have of becoming salient is if politicians and their campaigns press them relentlessly.

After four American diplomats were killed in Libya in 2012, Republicans spent years turning the word “Benghazi” into a running attack line against then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton — with little or no basis in fact. By contrast, evidence of a threat to democracy today is copious and clear.

Despite their caveats, both Cutter and Greenberg offer paths toward making the looming danger central in 2022. Cutter noted that highlighting bread-and-butter concerns does not preclude Democrats from arguing that “if we don’t win in 2022, the fight for democracy moves backward,” adding: “There’s room for both.”

Greenberg sees ways to link the “big lie” about 2020 with “disinformation about vaccines” as part of the same “dark force” that ignites anxiety among suburban voters. And an argument that “voters should decide elections, not mobs or politicians” would also resonate, she said, because “what people get upset about is that their votes don’t really count.”

Democrats will be guilty of political malpractice if they fail to challenge Republicans to get off the fence. For their own sake and the country’s, they must demand that GOP candidates stand unambiguously either with or against Trump’s ongoing efforts to demolish American democracy.

E.J. Dionne Jr. writes on politics for The Washington Post.

OBITUARIES BY TOWN

Avon
Eugene A. Boucher

Berlin
Ronald A. Bielomyza

Canton
David E. Bullock

Colchester
Jessica F Meltsner

Cromwell
Dorothy Ciemiecki

East Hampton
Kenneth C. Stevens, Jr.

Enfield
Linda M. Kaczmarczyk

Manchester
Robert F Hackbarth
Cynthia Thomas

New Britain
Ronald A. Bielomyza
Dorothy Ciemiecki
Peter J. Parker

Newington
Bertha Silver

Other Towns in CT
Paula K. Feder
Philip G Godin
Steven A. Green
Robert F Hackbarth
Joseph Melillo
Kenneth C. Stevens, Jr.
Cynthia Thomas

Out of State
Roger L. Belch
Philip G Godin

Simsbury
David E. Bullock

Suffield
Joseph Melillo

Torrington
Robert M Tasillo

Vernon
Steven A. Green
Linda M. Kaczmarczyk

West Hartford
Eugene A. Boucher
Jacquelyn H. Faienza
Jessica F Meltsner
Bertha Silver

Wethersfield
Jacquelyn H. Faienza


Windsor
Robert J. Dallesander
Robert M Tasillo

OUT OF STATE
Roger L. Belch
Camden, ME
Jacquelyn H. Faienza
Summerville, SC
Philip G Godin
Pickens, SC

*** Denotes name listing only.**
Please note: not all death notices are in alphabetical order.

OBITUARIES

Belch, Roger L.




Roger Leon Belch, 88, of Camden, Maine, died peacefully at home on 2/2/22 after a eighteen-year battle with cancer. Born in Windsor, CT, Roger was an Air Force Veteran who owned & operated a successful plumbing & heating business. He retired to Beverly Hills, FL, and then moved to Maine in 2017 with his wife, daughter, and son in law to continue his cancer fight.

Roger will be remembered for his vibrant personality and selflessness towards those in need. He was an avid beekeeper, builder, and lover of lobster. Throughout his cancer journey, Roger defied medical odds with an unbreakable spirit. His quick wit and humor never dimmed, inciting laughter in all those around him. Roger inspired many with his altruistic outlook on life and unwavering devotion to his family.


He is survived by his loving wife, Margaret (Shanahan) Belch of 62 years; his 3 children, Deborah Lyon, Robert Belch, and Brian Edwards; their spouses; and 11 grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at a future date.

Please sign guestbook at courant.com/obituaries


Boucher, Eugene A.



Eugene A. Boucher, 82, of Avon, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, February 2, 2022. He was the beloved husband of Elizabeth (Moorhouse) Boucher and loving father of Gerard, Carol, Paul, Stephen, and Sean Boucher. Relatives and friends are invited to call on Sunday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Duksa Family Funeral Homes at Newington Memorial, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington. His funeral services will begin on Monday at 10:30 a.m. at Newington Memorial, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 11:30 a.m. at St. Mary's Church, Newington. He will be laid to rest privately. To share a memory with his family, please visit us at www.duksa.net.


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Bullock, David E



David E. Bullock, 89, passed away peacefully on Monday, January 24, 2022, at UConn Health Center with his children by his side.

David was born in Cohoes, New York on February 22, 1932 to Herbert and Ruth (Ellett) Bullock. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1958 and went on to pursue a long and successful career in aeronautical engineering and project management with United Technologies until he retired.

David and his beloved wife Mina were married on July 14, 1956. They were together for nearly 56 years and were blessed with 5 children: David Jr., Stephen, Stacey, Debora, and Jennifer. They lived in East Windsor and Collinsville before moving to Simsbury in 2005.

Together, David and Mina enjoyed reading, traveling, gardening, doing crossword puzzles, making woolen braided rugs, and running. They were avid Yankees fans and collie lovers. David was a dedicated blood donor, giving more than 30 gallons. David and Mina were active members of the North Canton Community United Methodist Church.


David was predeceased by his loving wife Mina, his sister Ruth, and his brothers Charles and Herbert.

David leaves behind his children David (Kathy) Bullock, Stephen (Holly) Bullock, Stacey (Peter) Mott, Debora (Bruce) MacDonald, and Jennifer (Kevin) Majewski; 13 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. David will also be missed by his many friends and neighbors at Hopmeadow Place.

The family wishes to extend their sincere thanks to David's caregivers, Deyon and "the ladies," who took such wonderful care of him in his later years.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the American Red Cross, or North Canton Community United Methodist Church.


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Visit the obituary section on courant.com to share memories of loved ones.

OBITUARIES


Ciemiecki, Dorothy



Dorothy "Dottie" (Jablonski) Ciemiecki, 96, of New Britain, passed away peacefully on Thursday, February 3, 2022. She was the beloved wife of the late John F. Ciemiecki. Born in New Britain, daughter of the late Frank and Catherine (Samorajczyk) Jablonski, she was a lifelong resident of New Britain and a parishioner of Holy Cross Church. She was actively involved in the church and the Legion of Mary, as well as being a former president of the Ladies Guild. Dottie leaves her sister Eleanor Kozak of New Jersey, many nieces and nephews, great nieces and great nephews, and close family friend, Ewa Fadgyas of Canton. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Wednesday, February 9th, 10:00 a.m. at Holy Cross Church, 31 Biruta St., New Britain. She will be laid to rest in Sacred Heart Cemetery, New Britain. Duksa Family Funeral Homes at Burritt Hill, 332 Burritt St., New Britain is serving her family. To share a memory, please visit us at www.burritthill.com.


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Faienza, Jacquelyn "Jackie" Helene (Silvay)



Jacquelyn "Jackie" Helene Faienza (Silvay), 70 of Summerville, South Carolina devoted wife, mother, sister, grandmother, and friend passed away with her husband and daughter by her side on January 26, 2022. The matriarch of the Faienza family, she will be greatly missed by all. Jackie was born on October 28, 1951 in Hartford to the late parents of John and Helene (Silvay) Marzucca. Jackie grew up in West Hartford and graduated from Hall High School in 1969. During her senior year of high school, Jackie met her soul-mate Roberto Faienza and they were married on June 7, 1975. Jackie and Roberto began their family in Hartford prior to moving to Wethersfield in 1984, where they raised their three children, John Faienza of Hartford, Vinnie Faienza and wife Melissa of Rocky Hill, and Sara Faienza of North Charleston. Jackie's greatest joy in life was her family. While raising her family, Jackie also worked at their family owned business, Torre Tile in Hartford as a bookkeeper. Everyone knew Jackie to be a strong willed woman, who loved to laugh and be silly. Jackie was an outstanding cook who made weekly homemade tomato sauce and various other Italian dishes. Aside from cooking and chatting on the phone, Jackie enjoyed playing card games and completing crossword puzzles. She was an avid UConn Husky Women's basketball fan and rooted for the A.C. Milan soccer team. You could always find Jackie with a Pepsi in her hand, while wearing her favorite Tiger sweatshirt. Beside her husband and children, Jackie is survived by her three grandchildren, Gianni Faienza of Glastonbury and Giuliana and Antonio Faienza of Rocky Hill. She is also survived by her two sisters and two brothers-in law Elizabeth and Stephen Ciaffaglione of Southington, Doreen and Stephen Stiles of Wethersfield, and brother-in law Antonio and Lina Faienza of Cromwell, as well as sister-in law Rosa and Raffaele DiBattista of Italy. Jackie also leaves behind many cherished nieces and nephews and her high school best friend Yolanda O'Lenick of South Windsor. Jackie is predeceased by her stepfather Joseph Marzucca, father and mother-in law Vincenzo and Maria Gluseppa (Antonucci) Faienza and brothers-in law Carlo, Edmondo, and Telemaco Faienza. A celebration of life will be scheduled at a later date. Jackie will be greatly missed. Mamma, ti vogliamo bene.

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Green, Steven A.



Steven Allen Green, 68, of Coventry CT beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather passed away unexpectedly at home on February 1, 2022. Steve was born in Hartford Connecticut, the youngest son of the late Raymond Green and Julia Gochee. Steve was a graduate of Manchester High School, class of 1971. Upon graduation he was employed at Sears Roebuck where he met and married his beloved wife Patricia Mitchell. In 1984, Steve began his career as a Letter Carrier with the U.S Postal Service- Barry Square Office in Hartford CT. Steven was an active member of the NALC where he proudly served as his station's union steward. He retired in 2013 and enjoyed life as a snowbird in Nalcrest, Florida.

Steve loved and cherished his family and spent his days surrounded by his children and grandchildren. He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Patricia and his children Michael Green, Sandra Cobb, Matthew Green and his wife Shandra, and Stephanie Mason; grandchildren Tyler Cobb, Jacob Cobb, Jade Mason, Mara Grantham, Alajiah Smith, Alvin Smith, Myra June Green, Adrianna Smith and Otto Green; and great-grandchildren Jubilee Ruth Grantham, Isaiah Roy Grantham, and Oaklyn Cobb. He is also survived by his brother Larry and his wife Marie Green. He is predeceased by brothers Raymond and Thomas Green ans Son-in -law Roy Cobb.

Relatives and friends are welcome to join the family from 2 to 5 PM on Sunday, February 6, 2022 at the Burke-Fortin Funeral Home, 76 Prospect St. Rockville, CT. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11 AM on Monday, February 7, 2022 at St. Bernard Church, 25 St. Bernard Terrace, Rockville, CT. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

Memorial Donations may be made to St. James School's Afterschool program. 73 Park St. Manchester CT, 06040.

For online condolences please visit: www.pietrasfuneralhome.com

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Hackbarth, Robert F

Robert F Hackbarth of Madison died peacefully at home in the company of his beloved wife and family on January 27, 2022, after a lengthy illness. Bob was the husband of Elizabeth Louise Hackbarth (Pickett). A memorial service will be on June 19, 2022. For the full obituary please visit www.guilfordfuneralhome.com.

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Meltsner, Jessica F (Dean)

Jessica Meltsner, originally from Waterford, long time resident of West Hartford, and most recently of Colchester, widow of Stephen L. Meltsner, (Col. USAF/CNG) died peacefully Thursday evening. A retired dental hygienist, she was an avid art collector, who loved the work of Robert Caufield, Japanese woodblock prints, and she adored her two Dobermans. She is survived by her loving son, Adam, daughter-in-law, Erin, and her two granddaughters. Per her wishes, there will be no funeral. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the American Cancer Society. Ameltsner@gmail.com

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OBITUARIES


Feder, Paula Kurzband



Paula Kurzband Feder, age 86, of Centerbrook, Connecticut passed away peacefully on February 2, 2022. She was born in New York City on November 5th, 1935, to Toby and Diana Kurzband. After graduating from the Bronx High School of Science, Syracuse University, and the Bank Street College of Education, Paula taught third and fourth grade at PS 64 in Manhattan for eleven years. In 1965, she moved to Connecticut with her husband. She was a successful writer of children's books and a gardener; she was able to follow her passion at Clinton Nurseries and private homes. She is survived by her beloved daughter, Sarah Feder Weaver of Glastonbury, Connecticut, her former husband and the father of her daughter, Yves Feder, and his wife, Linda Skernick, of Bath, Maine, her sister, Karen Hewitt of Burlington, Vermont, her nephew, Corin Hewitt, his wife Molly Mcfadden, and her grandniece, Martine Hewitt of Richmond, Virginia, and her cousins Ana and John Turetsky of Oakland, California, and Benjamin Svetsky of Tel Aviv, Israel. Paula is the author of several popular children's books including "Where Does the Teacher Live" and "The Featherbed Journey". She continued to write up until the last few months of her life and was an enthusiastic participant in the Children's Book Writers Group. She was a member of Beth Shalom Radfe Zedek Synagogue in Chester, Connecticut which was an important part of her life. She will be remembered for her adventurous spirit with a lifelong sense of curiosity, compassion, and generosity. The family would like to thank the staff at Madison House and Beacon Hospice who took amazing care of Paula in her final days. There will be a graveside service in the Beth Shalom Section of Fountain Hill Cemetery, 57 High Street in Deep River on Sunday, February 6, 2022, at 12:00 Noon. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Beth Shalom Radfe Zedek Synagogue, 55 East Kings Highway, Chester, CT 06412 in her memory. To share a memory of Paula or send a condolence to her family please visit www.rwwfh.com Arrangements are in the care of the Robinson, Wright & Weymer Funeral Home in Centerbrook.

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Godin, Philip G



77, died peacefully surrounded by family on January 30th after a courageous fight with Covid-19. Phil was born January 16th, 1945 in Waterbury, Vermont to Forrest and Ruth Godin. He was raised there until moving to Stafford, CT with his four brothers Lawrence, Calvin, Reggie, and Roger as well as sister Joyce. He graduated from Stafford High School, later enlisting in the United States Navy where he was a veteran and served as a radar man on the USS Danielson. He returned home to Stafford where he began his career as an electrician for Combustion Engineering, Tyco, and Emhart Corporation. Phil was an avid sports fan of baseball, football, hockey and golf. A loving father and husband, he is survived by wife Deborah who he relocated with in Pickens, SC for the past several years. He will be missed by loving sons Phil, Dean, James and Timothy as well as immediate family member Bruce Stoddard. His grandchildren Ryu, Dillon, Parker and Stella became the light of his life. As was his wish, there will not be services for Phil and donations in his honor can be made to the St. Jude's Children's' Hospital.

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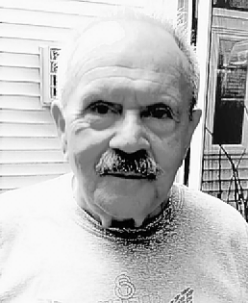
Kaczmarczyk, Linda M. (Scully)



Linda Marie Kaczmarczyk (Scully) passed away peacefully at home with her loving family by her side on Monday, January 31, 2022. Linda will be missed by all who knew her. She was known for spending time in her garden, her amazing cooking and her lifelong passion of caring for others. Linda leaves behind her best friend and husband of seven years, David Kaczmarczyk and her three wonderful daughters; Victoria, Rebecca and Stephanie (St. Germain) along with their spouses, Brian Herrmann, Rudy Matta and Josh Tyler. Linda was looking forward to meeting her first grandson as she adored her three granddaughters Rowan, Quinn and Olivia. Linda is also survived by her brothers, Raymond and Mark Scully and his wife Donna. We take comfort in knowing that she is reunited with her parents, Ellen and Raymond Scully, her sister Lorrie and brother Eric. We know that Linda will be watching over her loved ones from above until the time comes when we meet again. A private funeral service will be planned for the spring. The family would like to give a heartfelt thank you to Sheila and to the Visiting Nurse and Health Services members who enabled Linda to come home and cared so well for her in her final days.

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Parker, Peter J.



Peter J. Parker (Spiderman), 85, passed away on February 1, 2022. Peter was predeceased by his wife Joan Parker. He is survived by his four daughters, Katie Sziabowski and her partner John Zielinski of New Britain, Karen Parker Ouellette of New Britain, Sandy Parker St. Laurent of Newington and Linda Ganter and her husband John Ganter of Hampton, CT. And Peter's brother Paul Pante and his wife Miriam of Sarasota, FL. Four Grandchildren, Keith Sziabowski, Paul Sziabowski, Micaela Ganter and SSG David Ganter. Along with 3 Great Grandchildren, several nieces and nephews and so many friends. Peter was born on January 15, 1937 in New Britain, CT. Peter was a proud Navy Veteran, serving from 1955-1961 as a submariner on the USS Nautilus, the USS Fulton and the USS Salem. Peter was then employed by the New Britain Police Dept from 1968, which he served as a homicide detective, until retiring in 1991. There will be a private family burial. Those who wish to gather in memory of Peter are welcome to raise a glass with friends and family at the VFW at 7 Northwest Dr in Plainville, CT on Saturday, February 12 from 12 noon-3:00. New Britain Memorial & Donald D. Sagarino Funeral Home, 444 Farmington Avenue, New Britain has been entrusted with arrangements. For an online memorial, please visit www.NewBritainSagarino.com.

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Visit the obituary section on courant.com to share memories of loved ones.

OBITUARIES

Melillo, Joseph



Joseph Melillo, 83, entered God's kingdom on February 1, 2022, after a heroic battle with cancer. His final days were spent at home in Salisbury, Connecticut surrounded by his loving wife of 61 years, Suzanne Melillo, as well as family and friends.

At Joe's request, no calling hours or funeral services will be held. A memorial service to celebrate Joe's life with family and close friends will take place in the coming weeks. Information will be shared at a future date once details are finalized.

Joe was born on May 1, 1938, to Augustine and Julia Melillo in New Haven, Connecticut. After graduating from East Haven High School in 1956, he went on to earn his Bachelor's Degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Connecticut, and subsequently his Master's Degree through Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He spent his entire 33-year career as a mechanical engineering program manager at United Technologies.

As a devout Christian, Joe was a living example of Biblical love as described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. He was best known and remembered for his humble illustration of loving kindness to everyone he encountered -- the embodiment of an exemplary son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend.

In 1960, he married his high school sweetheart, Suzanne Melillo, and together had four children: Leslie Phelps, Jennifer Schon, Stephanie Wright (spouse Dane Wright) and Christopher Melillo. Joe is also survived by his sister, Rita Marotti (spouse Louis Marotti); 5 grandchildren, Melissa Grey (spouse Dustin Grey), Shannon Wright, Kyla Martin (spouse Thomas Martin), Jordann Campion (spouse Thomas Campion) and Elliot Phelps; and 5 great-grandchildren.

After retiring in 1993, he moved to New Hampshire with his wife, where they enjoyed 24 years before returning to Connecticut. Joe loved spending his days outdoors working in his woodshop creating beautiful craftsman quality furniture, hiking, fishing, and preparing fabulous meals for his family and friends, and feeding anyone who walked into his home. One of his most favorite things to do was spend summer vacations with his extended family in New Hampshire, and more recently at the beach, riding and tumbling in the ocean waves.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Joe's honor to:
Yale Cancer Center: Office of Development: P.O. Box 1849, New Haven, CT 06508-1849
Or online at: <https://www.yalecancercenter.org/gifts/>
Funeral Arrangements have been entrusted with Heritage Funeral Home, Suffield. Online condolences please visit: www.SuffieldFuneralHome.com

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Stevens, Jr., Kenneth Converse



Kenneth Converse Stevens, Jr., 86, of Bend, OR, formerly of Cheshire, CT, died November 20, 2021 after a very short illness. Ken was born in Hartford, CT on December 31, 1934 to Kenneth Converse Stevens and Julie (Roulier) Stevens.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 64 years Perry (Smith) Stevens, his daughters Julie Kosch of Skowhegan, ME and Alissa (Rick) Waring of Bend, OR, son Scott (Lucinda) Stevens of Rocky Hill, CT and grandchildren Dylan Waring, Madeline and Alexandra Stevens, and step granddaughter Lindsay (Mike) Chitwood. In addition to his parents he was predeceased by his son in law Thomas Kosch and step brother Allen (Rose) Frazier. During his younger years, Ken earned his letter on the high school swim team and achieved the Eagle Scout Badge with the Boy Scouts of America. He attended the Immanuel Congregational Church in Hartford, CT where he met Perry and where they eventually were married in 1957.

Ken was a graduate of Hartford Public High School (1953) and received a B.S. degree in Agriculture from the University of Connecticut (1957). From 1957-1968 he worked as a Soil Scientist for the USDA Soil Conservation Service where he conducted soil classification fieldwork for the Fairfield County, New Haven County and Tolland County SCS Soil Survey publications which are still widely utilized by many to this day. From 1969-1974 Ken worked as a Regional Planner and Conservation Specialist with the Central Naugatuck Regional Planning Agency in Waterbury, CT. In 1974 Ken joined Cahn Engineers, Inc. as an Environmental Planner where he also mapped soils and flagged wetlands. During the 1970's to late 1980's, Ken was the sole proprietor of a part time business known as Stevens Greenhouses at 968 Coleman Road in Cheshire where he was a grower of snapdragons, chrysanthemums and geraniums that were sold to dozens of florists in the area. Perry and their children also worked at the family's greenhouse business and sold Christmas trees for many years.

In 1978 he founded Soil Science And Environmental Services, Inc. in Cheshire, CT and worked alongside his son Scott for 26 years until his retirement in 2014 at age 79. The firm continues to specialize in wetland delineations, environmental assessments and soil testing for developers, engineers and thousands of property owners throughout the state. As a Registered Professional Soil Scientist, Ken not only had an advanced knowledge of soils & wetlands but he also had a green thumb and loved tending to his garden and plants. He enjoyed genealogy, boating, playing bridge and spending time with his family and friends. He also greatly enjoyed his family's cottage at Lake Pocotopaug in East Hampton, CT along with numerous winter vacations in Maui. Ken was a member of many local boards, commissions, professional organizations and service groups including the Cheshire Water Pollution Control Authority (19 years), Cheshire Environment Commission, Cheshire Land Trust & Exchange Club, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, Society of Soil Scientists of Southern New England, National Society of Consulting Soil Scientists and the Central Oregon Military Officers Association of America. For many years Ken was a member and deacon of the First Congregational Church in Cheshire, CT.

For 28 years Ken served both active and inactive duty for the United States Air Force. Ken completed four years of ROTC at UCONN in 1957 and began active duty. He enjoyed telling thrilling stories of flying a T-33 trainer jet (at Lockbourne AFB in Ohio) through the clouds and doing barrel rolls & a loop before almost passing out. From 1958-1960 he was assigned to serve as a photography officer at Shaw AFB in SC (where his daughter Julie was born). After active duty, Ken served in the reserves at Bradley Field, Westover AFB, Dover AFB, McGuire AFB and a few other bases located abroad. While the Air Force didn't utilize Ken as a pilot, he was assigned the responsibility of loading several types of cargo planes including the C-123, C-130 and C-5. Ken eventually earned the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and was the Commander of his 59th Aerial Port Squadron at Westover Air Force base in Massachusetts. He retired from the Air Force in 1985 and received a Wartime Service Medal in 2007. The entire family is very proud of Grandpa's long service with the United States Air Force that defends our country.

In 2014, Ken & Perry moved to Bend, OR to spend time with family and explore the wonders of the Pacific Northwest. Ken liked gardening around his house at Touchmark senior living community, visiting all the national & local parks, hiking trails and canoeing on the Deschutes River near their home, enjoying craft beers at local breweries and restaurants, spending time with his family, and researching family history. Just prior to his passing, Ken enjoyed a wonderful vacation trip back east to visit many of his old friends, family members and drive around Connecticut. The family is planning a memorial service to be held at the First Congregational Church in Cheshire on Tuesday March 22, 2022 at 3:00pm. Memorial contributions can be made in Ken's memory to the American Cancer/Lymphoma Society.

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Silver, Bertha



Bertha (Finkelstein) Silver, born 07/01/31, passed away peacefully in her sleep on 02/03/22 at the age of 90. Bertha, Nana to everyone who knew and loved her, was born in Queens, NY, and lived in Newington, CT for over 60 years. Bertha was predeceased by her loving husband, Fred, ten older siblings, and parents. Being the matriarch, Nana, the queen, dedicated her life to raising three generations of her family. Her family was her pride, joy, and the reason she got up every morning. Food was Nana's love language; remembered for her silver dollar pancakes, stuffed artichokes, stuffed cabbage, and baked mac and cheese. She never met a lobster she didn't love, "That was the best I've ever had," was her signature statement after every meal. Her contagious smile and positivity projected onto everyone she met. Nana provided a warmth and comfort that always made you feel at home. She loved the beach, animals, gardening, sushi dates with her grandchildren, and Chinese food from Great Taste. Her favorite memories were times spent in Rocky Point, LI and sitting around her dining room table on Thanksgiving Day surrounded by family. Nana leaves behind her children, Jay, Bonnie, Shari, Allyson, spouses, eight grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Services will be held Tuesday, February 11th, at 11:00 am at Temple Sinai in Newington, followed by a luncheon. In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made to the Jewish National Fund, jnf.org, for a tree to be planted in Bertha's name.

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Tasillo, Robert M



Robert M. Tasillo, 56, of Windsor was reunited with his loving parents on Tuesday, February 1, 2022. He was born on May 21, 1965, in Hartford, CT to the late Richard and Corinne (Argenta) Tasillo. He attended local schools and was a graduate of Windsor High School class of 1983 where he played ice hockey. Robert continued his education at The University of Connecticut where he received his bachelor's degree in English. He was an active communicant of St. Damien of Molokai Parish since his early years.

Robert enjoyed hockey and tennis. He spent his time playing cards, going out to eat at his favorite local restaurants with his two brothers, and spending time with his sister Lynne's family.

Robert was a loving brother, uncle, and friend. He is survived by his brothers, Gary Tasillo and his wife Kathryn of Windsor and Gregory Tasillo and his wife Alison of Windsor; his sister, Lynne Lapinski and her husband Alexander of Portland; many nieces and nephews, Abriana, Andrew, Samantha, Christina, Peter, Paul, Mia, and Quinn; and his great niece, Isabella.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 10:00 am at St. Gabriel Church, 379 Broad Street, Windsor, CT. A private family burial will be held in New St. Francis Cemetery, Torrington. Memorial donations in Robert's memory may be made to St. Damien of Molokai Parish, 379 Broad Street, Windsor, CT 06095. For online expressions of sympathy please visit, www.carmonfuneralhome.com.

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

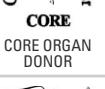





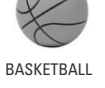















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Darien urged to reconsider Open Choice plan

Program is designed to bring more diversity, equity to state’s racially segregated schools

By Seamus McAvoy
Hartford Courant

Democratic lawmakers are calling on the Darien Board of Education to reconsider its decision Tuesday to reject a plan to participate in a pilot Open Choice program that would have admit-

ted 16 kindergarten students from Norwalk into four Darien elementary schools.
Open Choice, a program designed to bring more diversity and equity to Connecticut’s racially segregated schools, emerged in recent weeks as a controversial issue within the affluent, mostly white suburb.

The board voted 5-4 to reject the plan, with some members citing concerns over cost, class sizes and timing as the district recovers from COVID-related learning loss.
On Thursday, state Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff, of Norwalk, issued a joint statement with state Sens. Pat Billie Miller, of Stamford, and Will Haskell, of Westport, asking the board to reconsider.

“Last legislative session we were proud to expand the successful Open Choice program to include Norwalk, opening the door for students to attend public schools in surrounding towns, including Darien,” they wrote.
“Open Choice is a win-win, allowing both urban and suburban students to gain exposure to new communities and experiences,” the statement continues. “Strengthening the understandings of diversity

and inclusion among our young people cannot be done with just a mission statement. Diversity and inclusion are lived, not just promised.”
State Sen. Matt Lesser, a Democrat from Middletown, took to Twitter to share his disappointment. “This would have been a win-win for both communities and the state as a whole,” he wrote.

Turn to Schools, Page 2



“We’re just not keeping them. We’re not keeping the (medical) students in the state,” Dr. Bob Russo, CSMS chief medical officer, said on a media call Friday. MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT

Panel: Doctors trained locally ‘mostly leave Connecticut’

State Medical Society want this, plus health insurance issues, addressed by lawmakers

By Eliza Fawcett
Hartford Courant

With Connecticut’s 2022 legislative session fast approaching, physicians at the helm of the Connecticut State Medical Society drew attention Friday to the state’s inability to retain medical students and the need to reduce the burdens placed on physicians by health insurance companies.
“We have great medical schools,” Dr. Bob Russo, CSMS chief medical officer, said on a media call Friday detailing the organization’s legislative goals. “We’re just not keeping them. We’re not keeping the students in the state.”
Few medical students and residents remain

in Connecticut after their educational and training programs end, largely due to financial burdens, said CSMS legislative chairman Dr. David Emmel. Many find the cost of living in Connecticut too high, he said, and are strapped with educational debt that propels them to more lucrative positions in other states.
“The physicians we train in Connecticut mostly leave Connecticut,” he said. “It’s really painful to watch them go and it’s hard for practices that are trying to attract the best young physicians to get them to come to Connecticut.”
Emmel called on the legislature to address the “brain drain” through loan forgiveness programs and other efforts aimed at helping young physicians set up their practices in-state.

Members of the CSMS — which represents 4,000 physicians across Connecticut — also raised concerns about the growing consolidation of medical practices across the state, which they attributed, in part, to the burdensome requirements placed on small practices by health insurance companies.
Often, small practices struggle with the voluminous administrative tasks required by insurance companies, physicians said. High-deductible plans and prior authorization requirements, which compel physicians to receive permission from an insurance company before performing a procedure, are among the

Turn to Doctors, Page 2

Technology company plans Hartford expansion

GalaxE. Solutions plans to hire another 180 employees

By Kenneth R. Gosselin
Hartford Courant

GalaxE.Solutions, the New Jersey-based information technology company that raised its corporate flag in downtown Hartford in 2019, said Thursday it is expanding in the city again, with plans to hire another 180 technology workers.
Since establishing a hub in Hartford, GalaxE, a company that works primarily in the insurance and health care industries, has hired about 220 employees so far, said Tim Bryan, GalaxE’s chief executive.
With the pandemic still a concern, those employees are working remotely, the majority of them in the Greater Hartford area, Bryan said. But the company has leased an entire floor that GalaxE plans to “fill up” once it is safe.

“We are filling technology jobs in Hartford and in doing that, we’re helping to reinforce the image of Hartford as a technology hub where businesses can come and expect to have a robust technology workforce,” Bryan said, in an interview.
Hartford’s efforts to raise its profile as a center of innovation and technology got a major boost when India-based Infosys said in late 2018 it would locate a \$21 million hub downtown, hiring as many as 1,000 workers.
Last year, HCL Technologies, an Indian technology company that provides digital services to businesses, leased space at State House Square and announced plans to hire 200 for a new global delivery center downtown.
GalaxE’s Bryan said 100 of the new jobs planned for Hartford were formerly tech workers at an offshore company in the Philippines. The workers will staff a service desk for a major GalaxE customer.
“So we’re not talking you or me calling a credit card answering center,” Bryan said. “We’re talking about a desk where computer problems inside a company are identified and the first steps to diagnosing remediation are taken.”
Another 80 employees will be part of a workforce develop-

Turn to Tech, Page 2

No one is ‘keeping state money,’ CT nursing home owner says

Officials express concern that sale of business could be used as an excuse to withhold employee raises

By Dave Altimari
CT Mirror

The owners of a Willimantic nursing home under investigation for not passing a funding increase to its employees have told officials they are selling the business and want the new owner to decide how the money should be spent.
In a letter to the state Department of Social Services, JACC Healthcare Chief Financial Officer Jack Wynne said the potential new owner, Sam Fisher, has been involved in talks with union officials and that they are “finalizing the terms for distributing the funds to both the union members and remaining staff.”
Once the sale of Vanderman

Place is completed, Wynne said, the state funds will be distributed to the roughly 100 employees owed a bump in pay.
“No one is absconding with any money or keeping state money,” Wynne said in an interview with the CT Mirror.
“We have every intention of getting that money to the workforce,” Wynne said. “We decided it was better to wait until the transfer of ownership occurred and allow the new owner to decide how the funds are distributed, but perhaps that was a mistake on our part, because the transfer has taken longer than anticipated.”
Both union officials and state legislators had expressed

concerns that JACC could use the sale of the business as an excuse not to give the raises, which had been approved by the state legislature last year and funded through Medicare.
“We are afraid they are going to sell it and take off with the money and take advantage of the state,” state Rep. Susan Johnson, D-Windham, said.
Johnson is one of three legislators who signed a letter to DSS asking it to investigate why JACC hasn’t allocated the 4.5% pay increase to its employees.
The one-time increase was designed to reward nursing home staff at the front line of the pandemic. The virus has taken a heavy toll on nursing home staff and residents over the past two years.

Turn to Money, Page 2

CORONAVIRUS IN CONNECTICUT

Average new cases per day drops below 1,500

State hospitalizations, positivity rate decline

By Eliza Fawcett
Hartford Courant

Connecticut’s COVID-19 metrics continued to decline on Friday, as the state’s average number of daily cases reached its lowest point in roughly seven weeks.
The state’s number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19, as well as its weekly test positivity rate, have fallen steadily in recent weeks. Even so, Dr. Ulysses Wu, the chief epidemiologist of Hartford Healthcare, urged residents not to discontinue COVID-19 safety measures.
“The drop in numbers is very positive... but we’ve been through so many waves before,” he said.

Connecticut residents should still seek out vaccinations and booster shots and continue to mask in order to slow the spread of COVID-19 transmission, he said.
“All of us want a return to normalcy, and the only way to get back to that is to truly flatten the curve, and not go through another wave,” he said.

Cases and positivity rate

Connecticut on Friday reported 1,269 new COVID-19 cases out of 19,296 tests administered, for a daily positivity rate of 6.58%. The state’s seven-day positivity rate now stands at 7.18%, the lowest it has been since Dec. 20.

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CONNECTICUT

Robber had machete, but got no money from restaurant, police say

By Christine Dempsey
Hartford Courant

A machete-wielding robber who tried to steal cash from a Newington Wendy's early Friday ended up leaving with only a worker's cellphone, police said. No one was injured. The thief walked into the closed restaurant at 2384 Berlin Turnpike about 1:15 a.m. through an unlocked door. He then confronted employees while brandishing what they described as a machete, demanding money,

police said. One of the workers was able to convince the robber that the money was locked up and that they didn't have access to it. The thief grabbed an employee's cellphone and left, fleeing in a dark vehicle. Anyone with information about the holdup is asked to call the Newington Police Department at 860-666-8445.

Christine Dempsey can be reached at cdempsey@courant.com.

Cops: Man critically injured in stabbing in Hartford

By Christine Dempsey
Hartford Courant

A man was critically injured when he was stabbed repeatedly in Hartford Friday, police said. Officers received a report shortly after 4:30 a.m. of a person who had been stabbed at 22 Elliott St., an apartment building in the Barry Square neighborhood. When they arrived, they found a man in his 40s in the lobby with numerous stab wounds, police said. He was taken to the hospital, where he was listed in critical condition, Lt. Aaron

Boisvert said late Friday morning. Boisvert said police do not believe the stabbing is connected to a shooting at the same address Sunday. In that incident, a man in his 30s was shot about 3:45 a.m. That man is expected to survive. The police department's Major Crimes and Crime Scene divisions are investigating the stabbing. Anyone with information about it is asked to call the police tip line at 860-722-8477 (TIPS). Christine Dempsey can be reached at cdempsey@courant.com.

Virus

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As of Friday, Connecticut was averaging 1,439 COVID-19 cases per day — the first time that the metric dipped below 1,500 in about seven weeks. All eight Connecticut counties — with nearly the rest of the country — remain at “high” levels of COVID-19 transmission as defined by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. With this level of transmission, the CDC advises people to wear a mask in public indoor settings.

Hospitalizations

As of Friday, Connecticut had 785 patients hospitalized with COVID-19, a reduction of 84 individuals since Thursday and the lowest hospitalizations have been since Dec. 19. Hospital officials say some patients hospitalized with COVID-19 were admitted for non-coronavirus reasons before testing positive upon arrival but that a majority have significant COVID-19 symptoms. According to the state, 52.1% of people hospitalized with COVID-19 are not fully vaccinated. Hospital officials say the rate is significantly higher when

considering only patients with severe symptoms.

Deaths

Connecticut reported 175 additional COVID-19 deaths on Thursday, bringing its total during the pandemic to 10,083. The United States has now recorded 897,885 COVID-19 deaths, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University.

Vaccinations

As of Friday, 92.8% of all Connecticut residents and 95% of those 5 and older had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, while 76.7% of all residents and 80.8% of those 5 and older were fully vaccinated, according to the CDC. Additionally, about 51.2% of fully vaccinated Connecticut residents 18 or older have received a booster dose. The CDC warns that booster shots are sometimes misclassified as first doses, likely inflating the reported number of first-dose coverage and understating the true number of people who have received boosters.

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Students exit a Sioux City Community School District bus stopped on 26th Street on Dec. 6, 2021. Democratic lawmakers are calling on the Darien Board of Education to reconsider its decision Tuesday to reject a plan to participate in a pilot Open Choice program that would have admitted 16 kindergarten students from Norwalk into four Darien elementary schools. TIM HYNDSE/AP

Schools

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David Dineen, Darien board chair and elected as a Republican, joined the board's three Democrats in voting in favor. The board's other five Republican members voted against. Darien is far from the only suburban community to express reluctance toward Open Choice. Danbury, which hoped to send some students to neighboring districts in the fall, is delaying because not enough surrounding towns stepped up. New Canaan also said no to taking a small number of Norwalk students. Westport and Weston, which already educate some students from Bridgeport through Open Choice, will welcome some Norwalk students instead. Jamilah Prince-Stewart, executive director of FaithActs for Education, a faith-based nonprofit, said Darien's vote was no surprise. “We see countless communities vote against educating Black and Brown children,” she wrote in a statement. Superintendent Dr. Alan Addley, a spirited Open Choice advocate with more than 20 years of experience with the program, told the Courant that he was disappointed with the board's

vote but “certainly respects” its decision. “That is the governance role of the board and the system of checks and balances,” he said. Open Choice remains one of the most cost-effective ways to meet the goals outlined in Darien's board-approved strategic plan for diversity, equity and inclusion, Addley said. Under the proposal championed by Addley, the district would have admitted 16 kindergarten-aged Norwalk students across four Darien elementary schools. The students likely would have been predominantly Black or Hispanic, in line with Norwalk Public Schools' minority-majority demographics. By and large, Open Choice programs provide some students of color from Connecticut's urban centers with the option of receiving an education in the predominantly white, well-funded and typically high-performing suburbs. The program is reciprocal, but few suburban students generally participate. Program advocates, like the aforementioned lawmakers, routinely describe this as a positive for both city and suburban students. “Growing up in a diverse classroom prepares our students to succeed when they go on to college and when they go on to

adult life,” Addley told the Courant. But even if the Darien school board were to give in to pressure from lawmakers, other advocacy groups question whether Open Choice is the best way forward — particularly as school boards show reticence to participate in the voluntary, decades-old program. “Open Choice isn't the only solution. Closing the racial funding gap is,” Prince-Stewart said. “We hear the cries from communities like Danbury and Norwalk,” Prince-Stewart said. “But when state leaders had the opportunity to fund charter schools with proven records for students of color in those communities, they passed the buck to neighboring districts who don't even want to take in our children.” Jennifer D. Barahona, executive director of Norwalk ACTS, acknowledged the benefits of Open Choice, but only if implemented with “care and consideration.” Barahona, who grew up in Darien, said there is extensive support within the town to take steps toward fostering a more diverse community. But she also emphasized the need for predominantly white districts to be “adequately prepared

to receive and care for the needs of Brown and Black students.” Districts like Darien need to make sure they “have the lens for racial bias and culturally responsive teaching, and the support necessary to tend to the learning needs of those students,” Barahona said. Darien's plan would have included an Open Choice liaison, paid for by the district, to work with school staff and community members, and help the Norwalk students acclimate to Darien schools. Cooperative Educational Services, which coordinates Open Choice in the region, also provides a liaison to participating districts. Like Prince-Stewart, Barahona thinks there are other ways to reduce the achievement gaps that currently divide Connecticut children — namely, when it comes to funding. Darien schools receive about \$4,000 more per student per year than Norwalk schools, she said. “We would much rather have a state that has an equitable school funding formula that supports the needs of all students, and not just the 16 that [would have gone] from Norwalk to Darien,” Barahona said. Seamus McAvoy may be reached at smcavoy@courant.com

Doctors

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major obstacles. “When you go to the insurance company and say, ‘I want to do cataract surgery,’ or ‘I want to get an MRI,’ you need to go through a process that

is long and can be very tedious,” Russo said. At times, prior authorizations are retroactively denied, burdening patients with unexpected bills. And in some cases, waiting for authorization can delay needed care. The society's other goals for the upcoming legislative

session include addressing the pediatric mental health crisis, preventing physician burnout and expanding access to telehealth services. “Telemedicine has worked very well during the pandemic and the General Assembly and governor need to keep it going,” said

CSMS president Dr. Ron Adelman. “It provided patients with critical access to their physicians during COVID-19, particularly elderly and immunocompromised patients.” Eliza Fawcett can be reached at elfawcett@courant.com.

Money

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On Tuesday, DSS officials sent the legislators a follow-up letter, signed by DSS Commissioner Deidre Gifford, assuring them they are aware of the situation at Vanderman Place and that they have asked JACC to provide payroll records demonstrating that such wage enhancements were indeed paid to its employees. “In the alternative, if such

wage enhancements had not yet been provided to employees, the Department requested that the facility identify a written plan, including the timeframe, for providing staff with such intended wage enhancements,” Gifford wrote. Gifford said that DSS could recoup the funds in several ways if the pay raises were not granted, including taking the funding out of future Medicare payments or entering into a repayment agreement with the

company. “The Department has various recoupment options available and explores each carefully, so that the agency does not inadvertently harm cash flow in such a way as to negatively impact residents. The Department is exploring all such options in this case.” Union officials have estimated that JACC is sitting on anywhere from \$125,000 to \$250,000 in state funding. DSS sent a letter to JACC officials on Jan. 11 asking

for an accounting of the funding, including payroll records and receipts. The letter gave them 30 days to respond, and Wynne said they have done so. In the JACC's Jan. 19 response, Wynne wrote, “We have received your letter dated January 11, 2022 related to the use of the 4.5% rate increase for the use of wage enhancements. Please be advised that JACC Healthcare is in the process of transferring the license of JACC Healthcare Center of

Windham (d.b.a Vanderman Place) to Sam Fisher.” “On Friday January 14th, representatives from the Department of Public Healthcare performed a physical plant inspection, which I believe was one of the last remaining items to be completed prior to the approval of the license transfer. Due to this pending transfer, which is expected to be finalized in the coming weeks, Mr. Fisher has been involved in the process of determining the allocation

and distribution of the 4.5% funds,” the letter said. JACC has already sold its other Connecticut facility — Davis Place in Danielson — to Fisher. The staff at that facility has received its 4.5% raise. “Please be advised it is the intention of both JACC Healthcare and Mr. Fisher to fully utilize the funds to enhance the wages for staff and we will provide additional details in the coming days as the terms are finalized,” the letter said.

Tech

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ment program focused on information technology. The program is designed to recruit and train a “culturally, racially and ethically diverse and inclusive workforce,” with an emphasis on hiring city residents, GalaxE said, in a release. Increasingly, companies of all sizes are turning to information technology companies such as GalaxE and HCL because of the rapid pace of change in computer technology. Bloomfield-based Cigna, the health insurance giant,

was instrumental in bringing GalaxE to Hartford. GalaxE was a longtime vendor to Express Scripts, the pharmacy benefits manager that Cigna acquired in 2018. Prior to the pandemic, GalaxE had talked about wanting the buy a building in downtown Hartford for its offices. Bryan said a decision on a purchase is on hold until GalaxE determines its office space needs for Hartford as the pandemic winds down. Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin Thursday praised the expansion announcement. “Our city is a hub for information technology, and

we're proud to have companies like GalaxE. Solutions that build partnerships and invest in the people of Hartford,” Bronin said. Kenneth R. Gosselin can be reached at kgosselin@courant.com.

Tim Bryan, chief executive of GalaxE. Solutions, right, talks with Matt Fleury, president and chief executive of the Connecticut Science Center after GalaxE announced in 2019 that it had opened an innovation center in downtown Hartford. COURANT FILE PHOTO



CONNECTICUT

Family of missing Manchester woman organizing search

By Jesse Leavenworth
Hartford Courant

Family and friends of a missing Manchester woman plan to search for her Sunday around a Bloomfield restaurant, the last known place that her debit card was used after she was reported missing more than a month ago.

Volunteers are welcome to help in the search for Sherrian Howe, 22, who was last seen by her family on Dec. 21, her sister-in-law, Nyeshia Howe, said Friday. The search is set to start at 1 p.m. at the Copaco Shopping Center, 335 Cottage Grove Road.

Manchester police verified there was activity on a financial account belonging to Sherrian Howe after she was reported missing. The last known date and place that her TD Bank debit card was used was Dec. 31 at the iHop restaurant, 339 Cottage Grove Road, Nyeshia Howe said.

A pharmacy technician at a Walgreen's in Manchester, Sherrian Howe was attending college in Hartford with the goal of becoming a pharmacist. She was living with her brother in Manchester, close to her job, family members said.

Howe's brother was supposed to drop her off along with his son

at the home of her sister, Anthea Howe-Denize, in Springfield on Dec. 21 for a holiday visit, but she was nowhere to be found and did not answer phone calls or emails.

The 2008 Nissan Versa that Howe-Denize said she bought for her sister was found on Dec. 28 in a parking lot off Main Street in Windsor Locks, police said. Howe's laptop and other belongings were found at a nearby hotel in Windsor Locks, Howe-Denize said.

Manchester police say there is no record that Howe took a flight out of Bradley International Airport. Her sister-in-law said Howe's driver's license and credit cards were left

with her other belongings at the hotel and her passport was at home in Manchester. The only thing missing from her belongings at the hotel, Nyeshia Howe said Friday, was the debit card. The account held about \$6,800 when Sherrian Howe went missing, she said.

Howe had worsening depression and was not eating well, family members said. Police boosted the case to a silver alert on Dec. 29, Manchester police spokesman Lt. Ryan Shea has said, after "information was recovered which led investigators to believe she may have had suicidal ideations at some point prior to her disappearance."

Howe was described as 5 feet 1, weighing about 105 pounds. She also is "very timid," Howe-Denize said.

Howe-Denize said she prays every day for her sister's safe return and still calls Howe's phone at least once each day to leave a voice mail.

"I'm so used to talking to her every day — it's part of my routine," she said. "I'm just hoping that she's somewhere and listening to it."

Anyone with information about Sherrian Howe's whereabouts is urged to call Manchester police at 860-645-5500.

Jesse Leavenworth can be reached at jleavenworth@courant.com

Police: Cheney Tech student hit by car dies

By Christine Dempsey
Hartford Courant

A 15-year-old high school student who was hit by a car in Manchester this week died Friday, police said.

The teen was pronounced dead at Connecticut Children's, Lt. Ryan Shea said. He did not release her name, but she was a student at Howell Cheney Technical High School, which is around the corner from where the collision happened.

"It's absolutely tragic for the school community," said Kerry Markey, director of communications for the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System.

Although the school was closed Friday for weather reasons, online counseling was offered to students, Markey said. She said administrators plan to open the school Saturday for continued support and will provide grief counseling next week and will bring in therapy dogs, she said.

The student was struck about 5:40 p.m. Wednesday on New State Road, near the intersection with Hilliard Street. Police said she suffered "significant, life-threatening injuries."

The 81-year-old driver of the car that police said struck her stopped afterward and has been cooperating with investigators. He was not injured.

Officers from the Manchester Police Department Traffic Unit and the Metro Traffic Services Crash Reconstruction Team continue to investigate. Anyone who saw the collision or has information that may help investigators is asked to call Officer Kevin Jackson at 860-533-8651.

Christine Dempsey may be reached at cdempsey@courant.com.

Man charged with federal tax fraud, identity theft

Staff Report

A Stafford man was arrested Thursday on tax fraud, obstruction of justice and identity theft charges, according to federal authorities.

David Kamal, formerly of Hebron, appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert A. Richardson in Hartford and was released on a \$50,000 bond, federal authorities said.

A federal grand jury in New Haven returned an 11-count indictment on Feb. 1 charging that Kamal "willfully evaded taxes for the 2012 and 2013 tax years by filing false tax returns for those years and providing false documentation, including invoices and bank statements, to an attorney for the IRS in connection with tax court proceedings."

"Kamal then filed false tax returns for the 2014 through 2017 tax years by claiming \$153,400, \$148,910, \$49,300, and \$50,247 in unreimbursed medical expenses, respectively," federal authorities said in a statement. "He also submitted false documents in a U.S. Tax Court proceeding, and, without authorization, used an individual's personal information to file false tax returns and negotiate federal tax refund checks."

The indictment charges Kamal with two counts of tax evasion, four counts of filing a false tax return, one count of obstruction of an official proceeding and four counts of unlawful use of a means of identification, the statement said.

The case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service — Criminal Investigation Division and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David T. Huang.



House Minority Leader Themis Klarides addresses the opening session of the Connecticut Legislature in February 2018 at the state Capitol in Hartford. Klarides' run for Richard Blumenthal's U.S. Senate seat began with a 'soft launch,' with no campaign website or committee in place prior to the announcement in a taped interview aired Sunday on WTNH. JESSICA HILL/AP

Klarides has 'soft launch' in run for Blumenthal's US Senate seat

By Mark Pazniokas
CT Mirror

U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal's reelection campaign began 2022 with \$7.55 million in the bank, a big head start on Themis Klarides, the Republican who entered the race last Sunday not quite ready to run.

As a former state House GOP leader, Klarides' announcement made enough of a splash to attract a shoutout Monday from Fox News host Laura Ingraham to her 3.8 million Twitter followers.

But Klarides had no way to capitalize. She had no campaign website, no fundraising account and has yet to create a campaign committee, normally the pieces in place before a televised announcement.

"That was more of a soft launch," Klarides said this week.

Klarides confirmed in a taped interview aired Sunday on WTNH what had been rumored: She was abandoning a run for governor to seek the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate.

"Once I made the decision to do this, I was very excited about it, and we wanted to just get it out there so people knew where I was, and there was no more speculation," Klarides said.

Klarides said she will create a campaign committee no later than next week.

She might have company.

Leora Levy, a Republican National Committee member and GOP fundraiser, is making her own assessment of a run for U.S. Senate, and she quickly signaled in emails Sunday that Klarides would not dissuade her.

Blumenthal, a liberal Democrat who repeatedly drew personal attacks from Donald J. Trump when he was president, is catnip



Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., walks the halls of the Capitol in Washington, on Jan. 19. The year-end reports showed Blumenthal and the five U.S. House incumbents, all Democrats, well-prepared financially for the coming midterm election. AMANDA ANDRADE-RHOADES/AP

for Republicans trying to tap into a conservative national donor base.

Ingraham called the 75-year-old senator, who was the state attorney general for 20 years before his election to the Senate in 2010, a "dinosaur."

Levy was nominated by Trump to be the ambassador to Chile, but the Senate never voted on her confirmation. Would she seek the former president's support, an asset in a GOP primary, less so in a blue-state general election?

She was traveling to the RNC's winter meeting Tuesday and declined to comment. If she decides to go forward, Levy already has made contact with consultants experienced in Senate races.

Klarides reached out to Levy before her Sunday announcement, but Klarides said they did not connect.

"I don't really know what she's doing," Klarides said. "I know where I am, and that's why I

wanted to come out and let people know very clearly that I'm all in. I'm on the road."

For his part, Blumenthal put out an emailed fundraising appeal Monday. He named no Republican opponent, but said, "I'm up against radical, Trump-loyalist opponents who want to flip this seat."

Three Republicans already have created campaign committees, but only one has demonstrated an ability to raise money: Peter Lumaj, the 2014 GOP nominee for secretary of the state.

A candidate only since late November, Lumaj raised \$111,475 in his first month, according to a year-end finance report filed Monday with the Federal Election Commission.

Lumaj says he is in the race to stay.

The year-end reports showed Blumenthal and the five U.S. House incumbents, all Democrats, well-prepared financially for the

coming midterm election.

Three of the five congressional districts are solidly Democratic, while the 2nd and 5th lean Democratic but are potentially competitive.

Fundraising by state Rep. Mike France, R-Ledyard, who is running against U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, sputtered at the end of 2021.

He spent more money than he raised, and he ended the year with just \$91,000 in his campaign account, less than one tenth of Courtney's \$959,000.

George Logan, the former state senator challenging U.S. Rep. Jahana Hayes, D-5, was the GOP's top performer. He raised \$136,114 in the fourth quarter of 2021, bringing his total to \$262,803 since opening his campaign in summer. He had nearly \$174,000 cash on hand.

Hayes spent \$150,000 while raising \$215,000 in the fourth quarter. She began January with \$1.4 million in the bank.

U.S. Rep. Jim Himes, D-4, who is sitting on a \$1.9 million campaign account, has only token opposition so far. U.S. Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, D-3, has no Republican opponent yet.

Republican State Chair Ben Proto said two strong candidates are considering runs against Himes and DeLauro.

The strongest fundraising performance by a congressional challenger in the waning months of 2021 came from a Democrat.

Muad Hrezi, a young political newcomer challenging U.S. Rep. John B. Larson, D-1st, for his party's nomination, raised \$182,529 in the last quarter, bringing his total to \$314,804.

Larson raised \$220,141 and had \$804,379 in the bank. Hrezi had \$124,251.

State denies liquor permit renewal for New Haven bar

Staff report

The state Department of Consumer Protection Liquor Control Commission Thursday denied a request to renew the café liquor permit for The Grand Café in New Haven.

The decision means the Grand Avenue establishment may no longer serve alcoholic liquor, according to the agency.

"This written decision followed a public hearing that included public testimony from the assigned

liquor control agent, New Haven public officials and members of the New Haven community" on Nov. 4 and Dec. 16, 2021, the agency said in a statement. "The public hearing was prompted by the filing of a remonstrance petition, a formal document filed by at least 10 New Haven residents objecting to the renewal of the existing liquor permit."

The commission found "substantial evidence to deny the liquor permit's renewal," and found that the location and permit-

tee to be unsuitable for a liquor permit, the agency said in the statement.

"The opportunity to share concerns about a business's effect on its surrounding community is an important part of the remonstrance process," Consumer Protection Commissioner Michelle H. Seagull said, also in the statement. "The Liquor Control Commission takes these decisions very seriously and I appreciate their thoughtful deliberation. I'd also like to thank those who attended the hearing, and

the members of the New Haven community and New Haven officials who participated in this process."

The owner of the café could not be reached for comment late Thursday.

For more on remonstrances, visit ct.gov/dcp. Complaints or referrals relating to a liquor permit holder in the State of Connecticut may contact the Liquor Control Division by emailing dcp.liquorcontrol@ct.gov or by calling 860-713-6210.

LIVING

CELEBRITIES

Rodrigo is Billboard’s Woman of Year

From news services

Singer-songwriter Olivia Rodrigo only needed one album to earn her the title of Billboard’s 2022 Woman of the Year, landing her in the same company as Taylor Swift and Lady Gaga.

The former teen actor turned pop star will be honored as the 2022 Woman of the Year at the Billboard Women in Music Awards on March 2. Previous honorees include Cardi B, Billie Eilish and Ariana Grande.

Rodrigo became 2021’s biggest breakout star with her confessional debut album, breaking chart records and racking up awards and nominations. Rodrigo’s exploration of heartache, jealousy and insecurity on “Sour” broke streaming records and led to all 11 tracks landing in the top 30 of the Billboard Hot 100 chart, making her the first female artist to achieve the feat.

“Olivia’s trajectory to superstardom is the stuff of pop music legend,” said Hannah Karp, Billboard’s Editorial Director, in a statement. “Her talents as a storyteller and songwriter have made Olivia one of the most authentic and exciting new artists to explode onto the scene in years.”

Other award recipients at the Billboard Women in Music Awards include Gabby Barrett, Phoebe Bridgers, Doja Cat, Karol G, Bonnie Raitt, Saweetie and Summer Walker. The awards show will be hosted by Ciara in Los Angeles.

Bateman feted by Pudding members: Actor Jason Bateman was honored Thursday as Man of the Year by Harvard University’s Hasty Pudding Theatricals in Cambridge.

Students dressed in elaborate costumes bestowed the golden pudding pot on



Billboard has named singer-songwriter Olivia Rodrigo, seen Dec. 4, as its 2022 Woman of the Year. **LEON BENNETT/GETTY**

Bateman, but not before poking fun at his various roles in television and film and even tossing him a toy sword to fight his younger self.

“Fun fact — because of the scheduling of (Teen Wolf Too), Jason technically didn’t finish high school,” Hasty Pudding Theatricals President Nicholas Amador said. “All for a movie that only got 8 out of 100 on Rotten Tomatoes.”

To earn his pudding pot, Bateman, 52, had to endure a little extra embarrassment: the Pudding members had Bateman sing Bangles hit “Eternal Flame” (Bateman sang a rendition of the song in 2002’s “Sweetest Thing”).

Bateman is the 55th recipient of the theater troupe’s coveted pudding pot. The award recognizes people who have made lasting and impressive contributions to the world of entertainment.

Bateman earned a Primetime Emmy for outstanding directing in a drama in 2020 for “Ozark,” two SAG awards for acting in “Ozark,” and a best actor Golden Globe in 2005 for his portrayal of Michael Bluth in “Arrested Development.”

When asked where he’d be displaying his pudding pot in relation to his Emmy, Bateman said that he’d be placing it right above the prestigious television award. “You can’t put pudding in an Emmy,” Bateman quipped.

Feb. 5 birthdays: Singer Barrett Strong is 81. Actor David Selby is 81. Actor Barbara Hershey is 74. Actor Tom Wilkinson is 74. Actor Tim Meadows is 61. Actor Laura Linney is 58. Actor Chris Parnell is 55. Singer Bobby Brown is 53. Actor Michael Sheen is 53. Singer Sara Evans is 51. Actor Darren Criss is 35. Actor Henry Golding is 35.



ASK AMY

By Amy Dickinson

askamy@amydickinson.com Twitter@askingamy

Co-worker’s remark on looks was a faux pas

Dear Amy: “Carol” and I used to work very closely together. I still see her occasionally at work, and we usually enjoy a long catch-up.

When I recently saw Carol (from a distance) at the office, I noticed that she’d lost a significant amount of weight.

I had not seen her in months, so it seemed conceivable that she had been working to lose weight.

I was with a client, but I wanted to say something to Carol before she left the office. Carelessly, I called out across a few yards, “Hi, Carol! You are looking good!”

When she turned and looked at me with a wane smile/grimace, I knew I’d made a mistake. By the time I was done with my client, Carol had left.

Usually as a rule, I do not comment on weight loss unless the other person brings up their own weight/fitness first.

Later that same day, I ran into another old co-worker. She informed me that Carol had taken ill in the previous months with COVID-19 complications and had been in a coma. It’s a miracle that she is alive and walking around now.

I was shocked and ashamed over what I said and the way I said it.

Is there anything I can or should say to apologize? Help me find the words!

— *So Ashamed in Maine*

Dear Ashamed: Please hum this phrase to the famous tune from “My Fair Lady”:

“The shame in Maine Should not cause so much pain...”

To some extent, you seem to be blinded by your embarrassment and are making this encounter just a little bit about you.

You did not call out: “Hey, Carol, wow, you’re so thin! Way to go!”

You simply said, “You are looking good!”

Honestly, given the health hell she has been through, to have recovered enough to be at work is the very definition of “looking good.”

You should email, text or call her. Say, “It was great to see you in the office. Susan mentioned how sick you’ve been! I had no idea, and I’m so sorry to hear that. I hope you’re on the mend and feeling a little better every day. I’d love to catch up when you feel up to it.”

Dear Amy: My closest friend has been virtually out of touch for almost two years — since her mother died.

I saw her twice the first year and not at all last year. I dropped off her birthday present so as not to disturb her — and she loved it.

The pandemic is partly to blame, but mostly she is focusing on work, and during the weekend, she has her own routine. Interacting with others causes her anxiety to flare. For that reason, she is not even up for a five-minute phone call.

I’ve let her know that whenever she is up for seeing each other, to let me know, and that I won’t sweat it no matter how long it takes.

I send her innocuous text messages of love, usually once a week. She seems to prefer a single emoji.

While it has been difficult not to worry about her or to take it personally, I respect that she has let the majority of her friendships go, as she feels that is what she needs to do for self-preservation.

I miss her and care about her, but I don’t know what to do.

Any thoughts?
— *Patiently Loving from a Distance*

Dear Patiently: Keep doing what you’re doing. Don’t press her to discuss her mental health. Share memes, text her about the latest show you’re binge-ing, and yes — keep the channel open.

You sound exceedingly understanding, patient and kind. Surely this is taking a toll on you, too.

Dear Amy: The competitive teenage girl (“Lonely at the Top”) who tried out for all the teams her best friend tried out for sounded obnoxious. Now she’s going after a slot on the ice hockey team, even though she has no experience, while her friend has been working hard for it.

I can’t believe you encouraged her.
— *Upset*

Dear Upset: Male teen athletes are praised for their natural talent and competitive impulse. The same should go for girls.

I do think “Lonely” has a slippery slope ahead of her making the hockey team, however. Ice hockey is no skate in the park.

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MUSIC REVIEWS

Band flying high on ‘Set Sail’

It takes hard work to sound this relaxed. The North Mississippi Allstars have mastered their metier and pin the meter on “Set Sail.” The 10 tunes from brothers Luther and Cody Dickinson and their casual collective are loose but tight, playful and joyful, high-flying but grounded in a groove.

It’s a family affair, and Luther channels his inner Sly Stone leading two- and three-part vocal arrangements that include Lamar Williams Jr., son of Allman Brothers bassist Lamar Williams Sr. The singalong vibe creates a hippy glow, and Luther sounds as if he has his feet up as he sings “feeling laid back” on the swamp romp “Bumpin’.”

The pulse comes courtesy of Cody’s economical drumming style. He needs just a few strokes kicking off the title cut to establish the album’s funk foundation, and shines especially bright on “Juicy Juice,” a funny hip-shaker that might make Prince blush.

The Dickinsons are always generous about sharing the spotlight, and R&B veteran William Bell draws on his Stax roots taking the lead vocal on “Never Want to Be Kissed,” which swings on a bed of strings and horns. Sharisse Norman helps with call-and-response vocals on the dance tune “See the Moon,” and John Medeski contributes keyboard colors on two cuts.

The closing tune, “Authentic,” explains how the brothers do what they do: “We be funky naturally.” They make it sound so easy. — *Steven Wine, Associated Press*

Brent Cobb’s discography tells a story — and with his first gospel album “And Now Let’s Turn to Page...,” the country singer’s narrative takes a turn toward the spiritual. It’s quite a lane-change from,



‘Set Sail’
North Mississippi Allstars (New West Records)

say, the bar room hijinks of 2018’s “Providence Canyon,” but it packs all the heart of 2020’s more mellow “Keep ‘Em On They Toes.”

Cobb sounds right at home in the church pew. His twang and unrushed vocals are perfectly placed there, as he takes on eight traditional gospel songs, including “We Shall Rise,” Cobb’s funky, honky-tonking rendition of the jubilant “Hallelujah! We Shall Rise.” His tender vocals bring earnestness to “Just a Closer Walk to Thee.”

There’s an original track, too, co-written by Cobb; his wife, Layne; and Mike Harmeier, called “When It’s My Time.” “It ain’t been easy, going this long. Riding the fine line, between right and wrong,” Cobb sings, in a tussle with his own mortality. Reflection is nothing new to Cobb’s music, but a serious car wreck in 2020 marked a shift for the singer, and pushed him to finally record the gospel album he’d been keeping on his to-do list.

“And Now Let’s Turn to Page...” excels in bringing refreshed energy to the familiar. It’s easy to imagine Cobb standing for his church solo beside an old organ on the quaint “In the Garden,” and “Old Rugged Cross,” with its acoustic guitar and choir-backed chorus, proves to be a moving rendition.

From beginning to end, “And Now Let’s Turn to



‘And Now Let’s Turn to Page...’
Brent Cobb (Ol’ Buddy Records)

Page...” serves as a lovely country church primer, certainly worthy of a hearty “Amen.” — *Melanie Sims, Associated Press*

Sibling harmony can be a contradiction in terms. It also makes for lovely music, and that’s the case here. The sisterly sonorities of Eleanor and Bonnie Whitmore mesh beautifully on their duo debut, the voices are easy to differentiate but complementary as they explore a range of styles.

“Ghost Stories” is an album of loss, with death and grief recurring themes, but the Whitmores also sing about too much fun. Eleanor’s considerable violin and fiddle skills are also effectively deployed in a variety of ways.

The Whitmores’ original material includes songs rooted in the bayou (“The Ballad of Sissy & Porter” is a Cajun-style stomper) and the Bijou (“Greek Tragedy” could be a movie theme). Vocals soar, and not just on “Learn to Fly” (the sisters are both pilots).

One of the covers is “On the Wings of a Nightingale,” written by Paul McCartney and recorded in the 1980s by the Everly Brothers. The Whitmores’ version is sparer, and Eleanor and Bonnie each takes a harmony part, as if beckoning the listener to supply the melody. Their music is that inviting. — *Steven Wine*

HOROSCOPES

Tarot.com

Aries (March 21-April 19): Someone might grate on your nerves. You’re allowed to ignore them and pay attention to your own life instead. You may have to shrug your shoulders and get on with things. Spending time with friends can add cheer to your day.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): Dealing with people who don’t see the world in the same way as you can be downright stressful. All you need to do today is be prepared to ask if there’s something going on that you don’t understand. People might not realize you need any help unless you ask. Say something the moment you feel lost.

Gemini (May 21-June 20): A little bit of self-indulgence shouldn’t do you any harm right now. In fact, it may help you feel better able to face the world. The key thing is to keep it only to a little bit! Think about why you want to do the things that you’re doing. It may take a while to find the answers, but the questions are worth asking.

Cancer (June 21-July 22): You may be too concerned about manipulation from friends at the moment. You’re blaming others for cramping your style when you’ve done all the cramping yourself. Consider taking a close look to see if there are better approaches.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Associated Press

On Feb. 5, 1917, the U.S. Congress passed, over President Woodrow Wilson’s veto, an act severely curtailing Asian immigration.

In 1922, the first edition

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Currently, people lack respect for your boundaries. It may feel like they’re calling in favors solely to be a nuisance! That said, you might need to consider the idea that their requests are reasonable — you’re just tired. Make an effort to ensure you at least cover what you promised.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): It’s OK to hit pause on a hobby if you aren’t enjoying yourself. Plus, you can take this time to get some work done on other things. When it comes to your daily tasks, there is plenty of help available as long as you politely tell people when you need it. Today is a day for being practical — fun will come again later.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Domestic obligations can completely cramp your style. In fact, you might start to wonder if you have a style at all! There’s no point in moping about, but that doesn’t mean you need to completely write off today. Feel free to show your true feelings as you get things done in whatever way you can.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You could be distracted by people requesting favors right now. You don’t have to say yes just because someone asks. You don’t have to say no to everything either. Your best option is to do your best to work out whether you have enough free time.

of Reader’s Digest was published.

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed increasing the number of U.S. Supreme Court justices; the proposal, which failed in Congress, drew accusations that Roosevelt was attempting to “pack” the court.

In 1971, Apollo 14 astronauts Alan Shepard and

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Throwing money at anything that bothers you may not solve any underlying issues. In fact, it could bring about more problems later. The solution? Take an extra moment today to ensure that the spending you have in mind is a good idea. Don’t buy everything that strikes your fancy.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): An offer that sounds wonderful could have some strings attached. That doesn’t have to be a problem if you’re happy to accept them, but make sure you have the full picture first. Taking the easy way out by simply saying yes could lead to plenty of regrets. Don’t be worried about refusing!

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): This isn’t a day for getting lots done. Couch naps call your name and it’ll be all too easy to put things off. There are probably at least a few things on today’s list that can wait until tomorrow for your attention. Figure out which ones need to be finished right away and get them done as soon as possible.

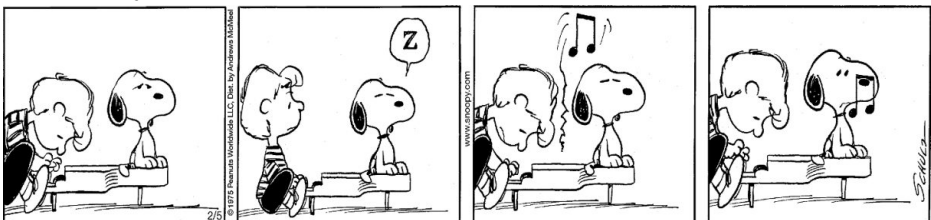
Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Chattering might bore you to tears today. Still, these people are likely your friends for a reason. Try to have patience until you can politely disengage. Then you can take some time to enjoy being in your own space! Any actual movement can wait. .

Edgar Mitchell stepped onto the surface of the moon in the first of two lunar excursions.

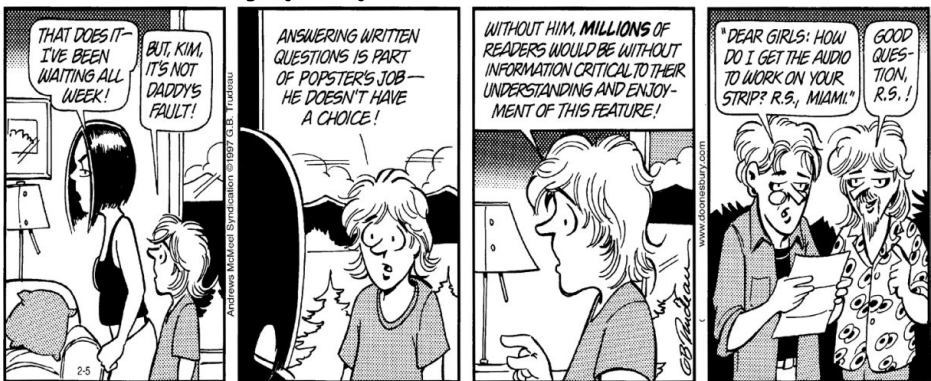
In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, granting workers up to 12 weeks unpaid leave for family emergencies.

In 2020, the Senate voted to acquit President Donald Trump.

Peanuts By Charles M. Schulz



Classic Doonesbury By Garry Trudeau



Garfield By Jim Davis



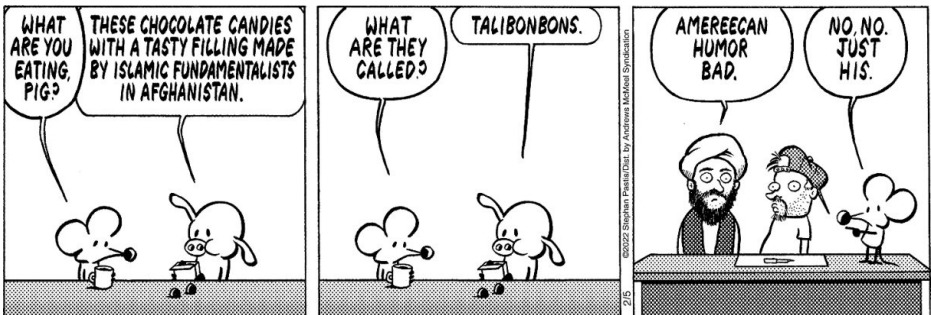
Shoe By Gary Brookins & Susie MacNelly



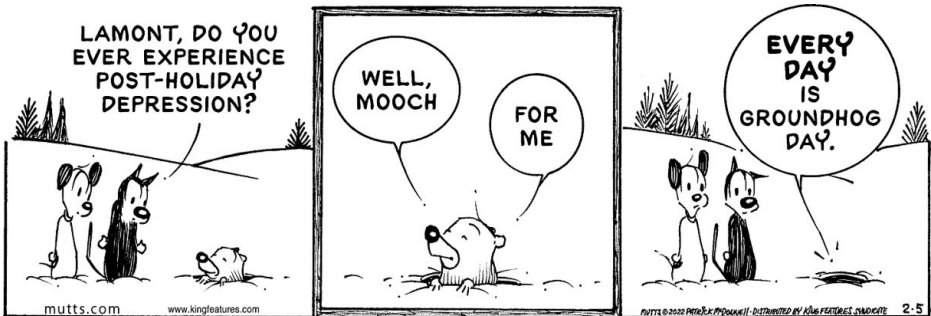
Dustin By Steve Kelley & Jeff Parker



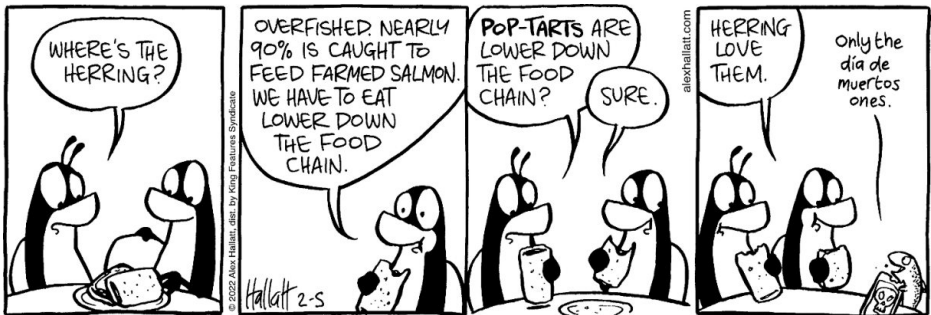
Pearls Before Swine By Stephan Pastis



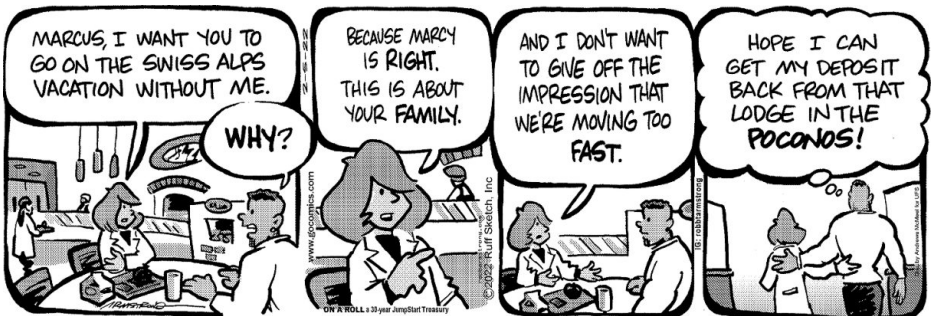
Mutts By Patrick McDonnell



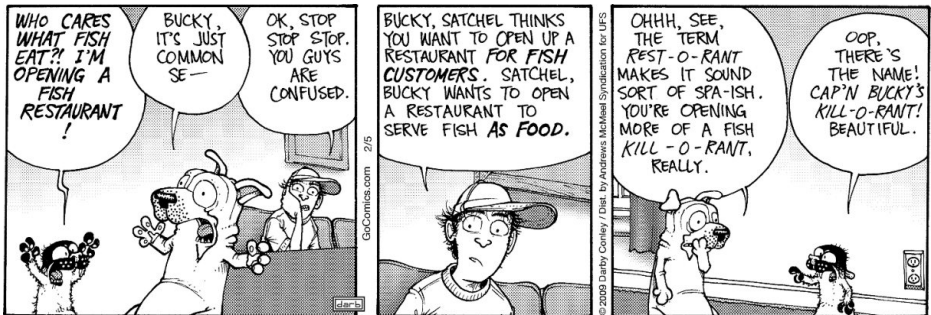
Arctic Circle By Alex Hallatt



Jump Start By Robb Armstrong



Get Fuzzy By Darby Conley



Blondie By Dean Young and John Marshall



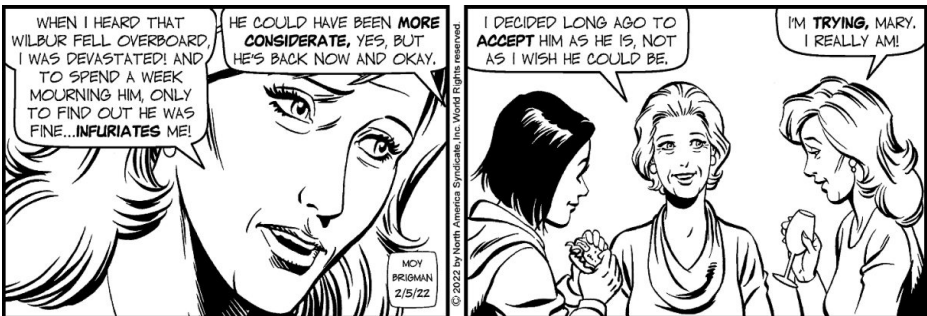
Dilbert By Scott Adams



Gil Thorp By Neal Rubin and Frank McLaughlin



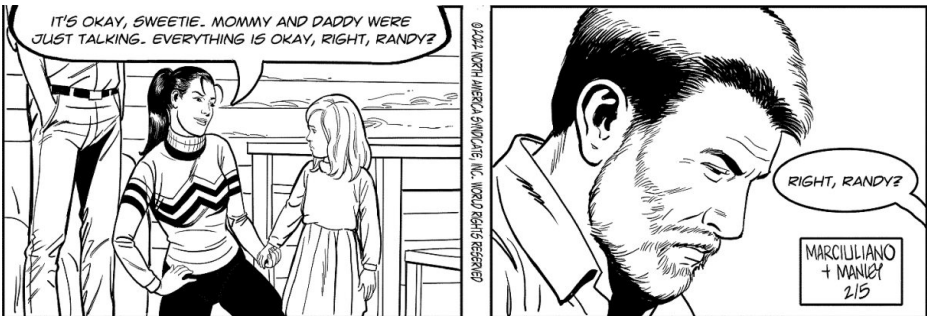
Mary Worth By Karen Moy and June Brigman



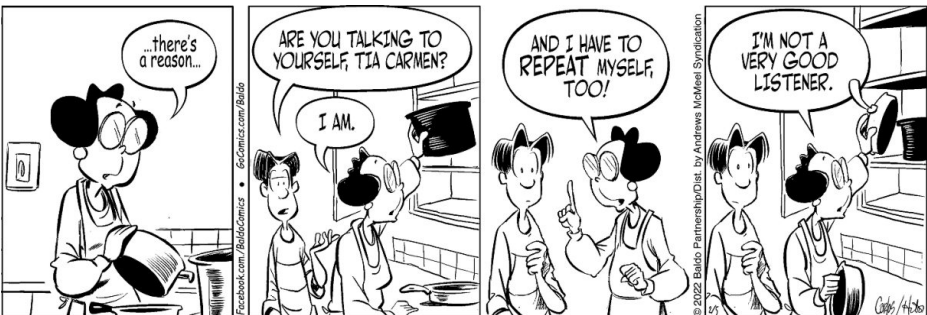
Rex Morgan, M.D. By Terry Beatty



Judge Parker By Woody Wilson and Mike Manley



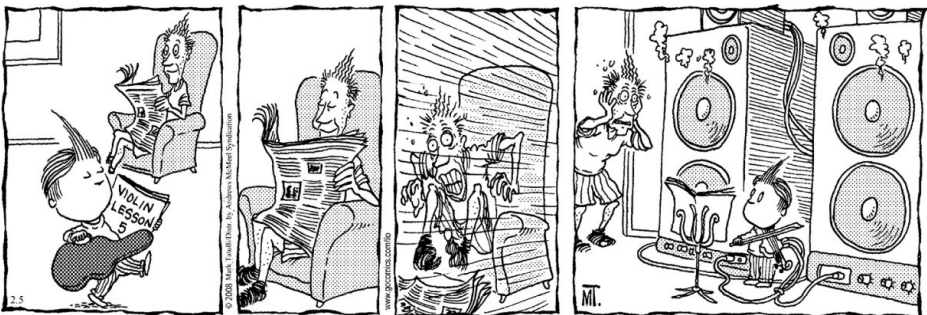
Baldo By Cantu and Castellanos



Funky Winkerbean By Tom Batiuk



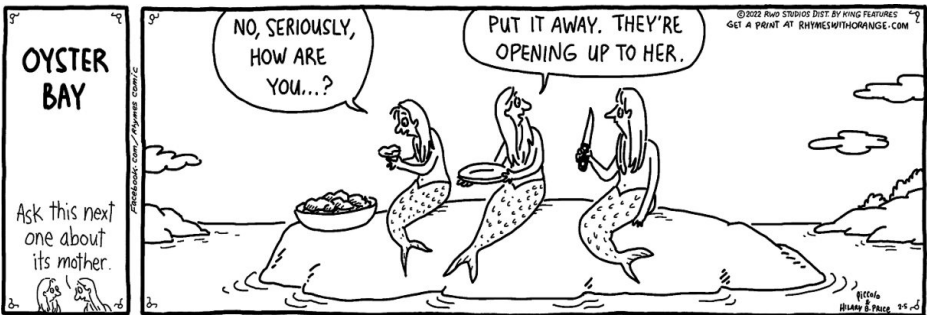
Lio By Mark Tatulli



Wizard Of Id By Johnny Hart and Brant Parker



Rhymes With Orange By Hilary Price



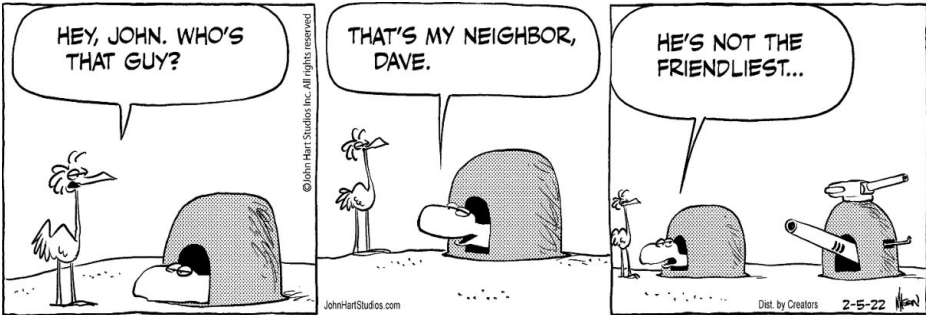
Monty By Jim Meddick



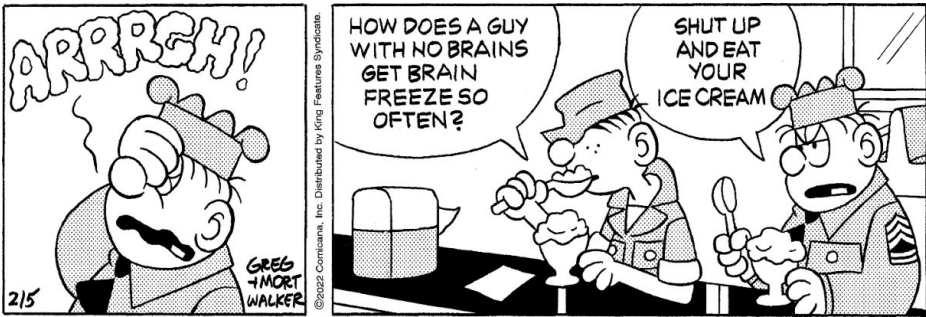
For Better Or For Worse By Lynn Johnston



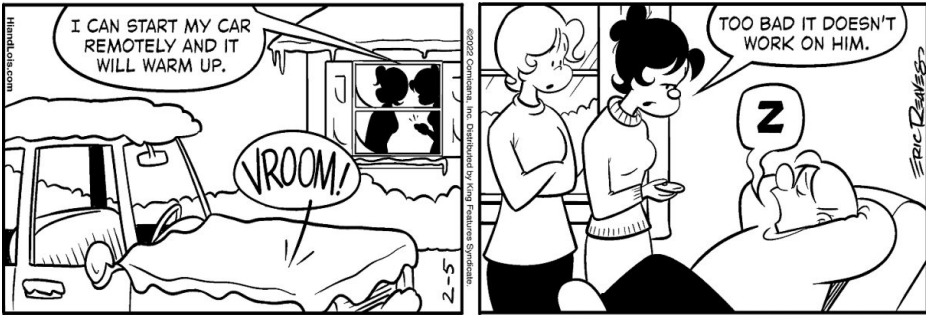
B.C. By Hart



Beetle Bailey by Mort, Greg & Brian Walker



Hi & Lois By Greg and Brian Walker and Chance Browne



Hagar The Horrible By Chris Browne



Non Sequitur By Wiley Miller



Curtis By Ray Billingsley



Pickles By Brian Crane



Zits By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman



Rose Is Rose By Pat Brady and Don Wimmer



Mother Goose And Grimm By Mike Peters



CROSSWORD

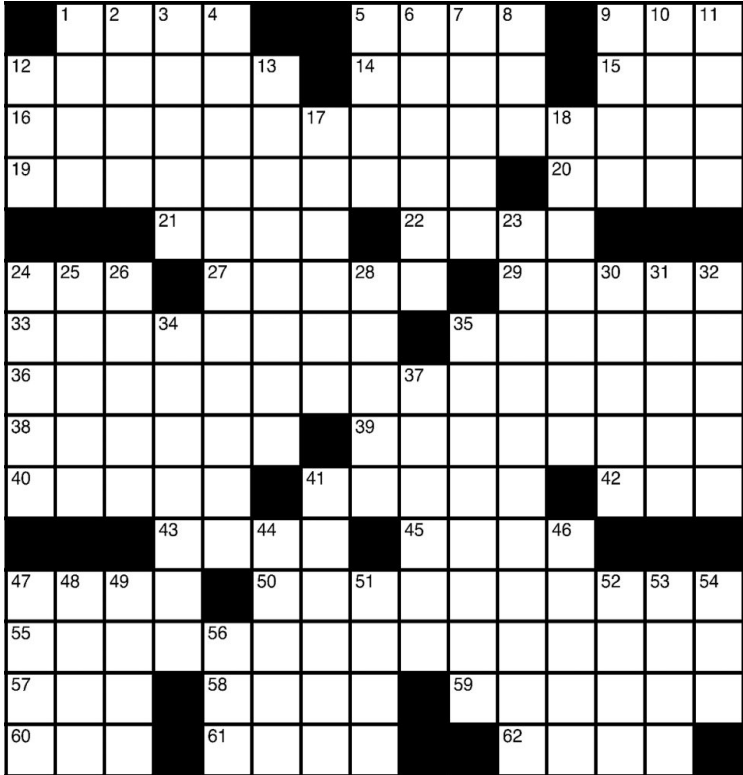
EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

Across

- 1 Possible cause of price cuts
- 5 Sensitivity symptom
- 9 Bucks' gp.
- 12 Overdo, perhaps
- 14 Greeting or parting word
- 15 Larter of "Heroes"
- 16 One might be involved in a gag
- 19 Finish in a winery
- 20 Gossamer
- 21 Talk with one's hands
- 22 Conductor Klemperer
- 24 Again and again, in verse
- 27 Composer of "furniture music"
- 29 Decision-making board with no members
- 33 Haydn oratorio, with "The"
- 35 Bull elk, at times
- 36 Sauce named for a city
- 38 Fancies
- 39 Transaction involving the repurchase of securities recently unloaded
- 40 "... a __ sorrows and acquainted with grief": "Messiah"
- 41 Pound parts
- 42 Bobs and weaves
- 43 Lean meat source
- 45 Shows interest ... or a lack of it
- 47 __ Minor
- 50 Certain cookie vendor's reward

Down

- 1 Slip
- 2 Broadway theatre dedicatee
- 3 Drives
- 4 Travelers' aids, briefly
- 5 Lays on, as buttercream
- 6 Sneak, in a way
- 7 Insert indicator
- 8 Plot device?
- 9 Org. in 2018's "First Man"
- 10 Like-minded group
- 11 Like a screened-in porch, say
- 12 Car-wash-sponsoring org., maybe
- 13 Black numbers?
- 17 Prominent figure in the Reign of Terror
- 18 Loses, with "off"
- 23 Connected (with)
- 24 Certain razor namesake
- 25 2002 title role for Salma
- 26 Carpenter's joint component
- 28 Open-mouthed
- 30 Tale in which Hector and Achilles duel
- 31 __ shot
- 32 Horned zodiac animal
- 34 Agile performer
- 35 Twice-baked cookies
- 37 Astringent in red wine
- 41 Like some bio majors
- 44 Get to chuckle
- 46 Observed, maybe
- 47 Some are visual
- 48 Short cut?
- 49 Words from Dr. Watson
- 51 Great American Ball Park team
- 52 Effort
- 53 Command in BASIC
- 54 Musician whose name is a number in reverse
- 56 Pitmaster's application



By Stella Zawistowski Tribune Content Agency 2/5/22

BRIDGE

BY STEVE BECKER

East dealer.

North-South vulnerable.

NORTH

♠ Q J 4
♥ K 9
♦ 8 5
♣ A Q 10 7 5 4

WEST

♠ 10 8 6 5 2
♥ 8 7 6 4 3
♦ Q 4
♣ 6

EAST

♠ 9 3
♥ 10 2
♦ 10 9 7 3 2
♣ J 9 8 2

SOUTH

♠ A K 7
♥ A Q J 5
♦ A K J 6
♣ K 3

The bidding:

East South West North
Pass 3 NT Pass 7 NT
Opening lead — eight of hearts.

An exploratory procedure

Most players find it difficult to count out a hand, but anyone willing to try eventually finds that the difficulty is more imaginary than real. The only skill required is the ability to count to 13 and then to apply the knowledge gained to the problem at hand.

Consider this deal where West leads a heart against seven notrump. Declarer has 12 sure tricks and is a heavy favorite to pick up the 13th in the club suit. The only real danger is an unfavorable club division, so South should take steps to combat a potential 4-1 split.

To this end, he does not tackle the clubs at once, but postpones playing them until he learns as much as he possibly can about the unseen hands.

He begins by cashing four hearts and three spades, discovering in the process that East started with a doubleton in both suits. Next, he cashes the ace of diamonds and K-A of clubs, West showing out on the second round.

With just three tricks remaining to be played, the count of the hand is now complete. East started with precisely two spades, two hearts, four clubs and, hence, five diamonds (of which he has only one left, since he still has the J-9 of clubs in his hand). Double-checking this, West had precisely five spades, five hearts, one club and, hence, two diamonds (of which he also has only one left). This knowledge is very important, because South might otherwise be tempted to take a diamond finesse for his 13th trick — a move that would be a colossal blunder in view of the known facts. So, after cashing dummy's queen of clubs and discarding a diamond, South leads a diamond toward the K-J. When East follows low, South confidently plays the king, knowing full well that the king will catch West's queen to make the grand slam.

JUMBLE

BY DAVID HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SIPEO

THHCA

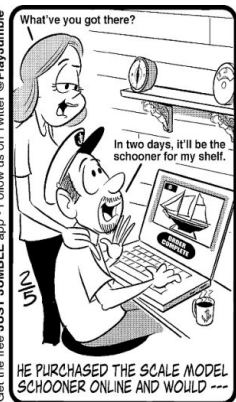
DERNOV

RPNIAS

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Answers Monday)

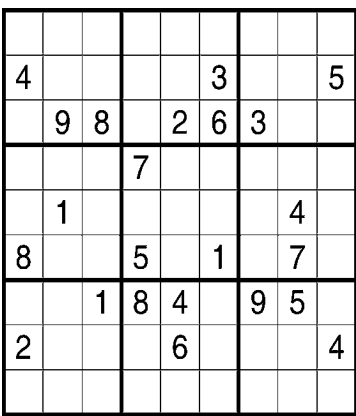
Yesterday's Jumbles: HITCH SAUTE PRIMER SPIRAL Answer: They raised money to repair their church because they didn't want to see their — PARISH PERISH



HE PURCHASED THE SCALE MODEL SCHOONER ONLINE AND WOULD ...

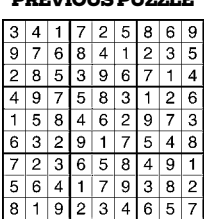
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

TODAY'S SUDOKU

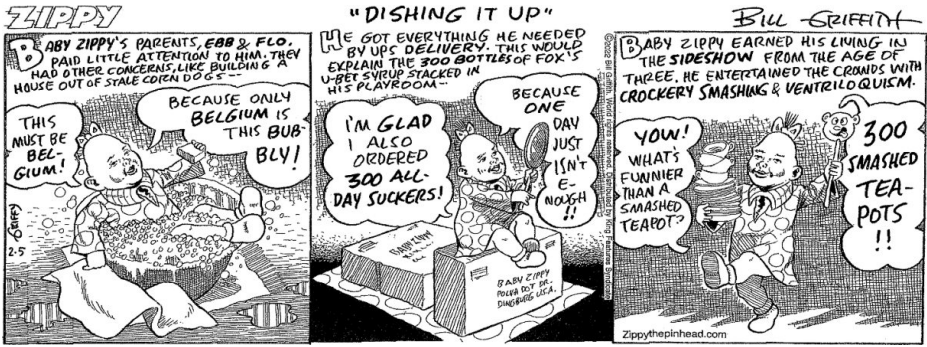


Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE



ANSWER TO PREVIOUS CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Motoring
Inside

Hartford Courant

SPORTS

COURANT.COM/SPORTS

UCONN BASKETBALL

Weekend feels like good time for turning point



Dom Amore

PHILADELPHIA — The basketball teams at UConn rarely travel on the same wavelength, but this season has been anything but typical. They both have been riding highs and lows and arrive together at a watershed week-end.

The men have another chance to make that long-awaited breakthrough and beat one of the top teams in the Big East, at Villanova at noon Saturday. They are running out of such opportunities.

The women have been playing shorthanded most of the season, still are, but have handled their Big East opposition, never more impressively than at Creighton this week. But this is their last chance to notch another significant out-of-conference victory, and No. 7 Tennessee comes to Hartford Sunday, high noon, high leverage.

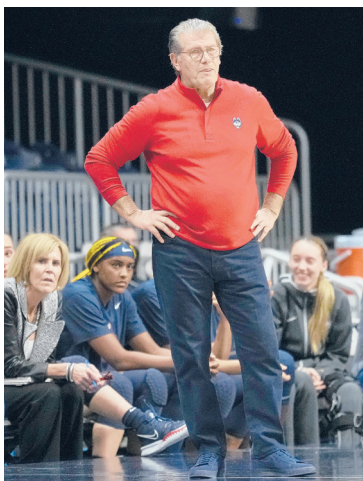
Before getting carried away, it should be kept front and center in the consciousness that watershed does not mean make-or-break, do-or-die, win-or-go-home. There will be no reason to lose one's cool, walking in or out of the arenas. Whatever happens this week-end, both teams will wake up Monday morning with their goals on the table.

But for both bands of Huskies, this is a good time for a turning point, to steer their seasons decisively in the right direction.

The men are ranked 17th, but after the loss at home to Creighton on Wednesday night, they are in danger of falling out of the Top 25 if they lose at Villanova, ranked 12th. The standings can be put aside for the moment, the Huskies just need to prove they can play at the top of the conference. They finished third last season, with a truncated schedule, but lost three times to Creighton and once to Villanova, the teams above them.

"Every game you play at UConn is a big game," Dan Hurley said, after arriving in Philly by bus, due to the icy conditions at Bradley "because

Turn to Amore, Page 4



UConn head coach Geno Auriemma watches as his team against Butler on Jan. 12 in Indianapolis. The rematch, slated for Friday, was canceled. **AJ MAST/AP**

UCONN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Game vs. Butler canceled due to weather-related travel issues

By Alexa Philippou
Hartford Courant

It's been a season of abnormalities and disruptions for the UConn women's basketball team, and Friday was no different.

The No. 10 Huskies' Friday evening game against conference foe Butler was canceled due to winter weather-related travel issues on the Bulldogs' end, the school announced Friday morning. UConn's next game will be a big

one versus No. 7 Tennessee at noon Sunday at the XL Center.

UConn's radio play-by-play broadcaster Bob Joyce first indicated the game could be canceled when he tweeted Friday morning, "Butler WBB is stuck at home in Indy as Wx [weather] and plane issues kept them from flying to CT. Tonight's game at UConn is iffy at best right now."

A wintry mix is expected Friday afternoon in Connecticut. UConn previously demolished

one-win Butler, 92-47, in January. The schools did not provide a makeup date for the game. The Huskies previously had four Big East games canceled due to COVID-19 issues in late December and early January. Only one of those four contests has been made up.

UConn said fans who purchased tickets for the Butler game through UConn athletics can exchange

Turn to UConn, Page 4

UCONN MEN'S BASKETBALL



When last UConn and Villanova met, the Wildcats' Collin Gillespie dropped a team-leading 20 on R.J. Cole and the Huskies in a 68-60 win. Gillespie is back leading 'Nova against UConn on Saturday. **MATT SLOCUM/AP**

Brushing up that résumé

Huskies have a chance to make big statement at No. 12 Villanova in key Big East matchup

By Shreyas Laddha
Hartford Courant

The last time the UConn men's basketball team had any success

against Villanova came back on March 22, 2014. The Wildcats have one the last four meetings since.

For two teams ranked in the top 20 and looking to make a statement in the Big East Conference as the postseason looms, this game, tipping at noon at the Wells Fargo Center, is obviously an important one. It's a chance to make that statement.

Villanova (16-6, 9-3 Big East) is ranked No. 12 and coming off an 83-73 loss to No. 24 Marquette.

While No. 17 UConn (15-5, 6-3) lost 59-55 to unranked Creighton on Tuesday.

For the Huskies, winners of five of their last six, a win not only boosts their resume, but it moves them to into second place in the conference, a spot Villanova currently holds. It also helps improve their Q1 wins record to 3-4. For the Wildcats, a win against UConn offers the same boost while creating some separation from UConn in the standings.

Up next



UConn at Villanova
noon, FOX

UConn matches up well against Villanova, something that's obvious to Jay Wright, Villanova's Hall of Fame coach.

"We have a great team coming in here that is really talented, really

Turn to Huskies, Page 4

WINTER OLYMPICS AT A GLANCE
A look at top results and news from the Beijing Games.

HIGHLIGHTS

■ An opening ceremony on a frosty night had a fiery conclusion Friday, when the flame was placed inside a giant snowflake to give China's first Winter Olympics the symbolic opening.

■ According to NBC, this year's Olympics will be the first to include coverage of all events both live and on demand.

■ IOC President Thomas Bach thanked those around the globe who he says have gone "beyond the call of duty" to make the events happen amid a raging pandemic.

More Olympics coverage, Page 5



Chinese athletes Dinigeer Yilamujiang and Zhao Jiawen wave during the opening ceremony on Friday in Beijing. **JAE C. HONG/AP**

WINTER OLYMPICS

Amid lockdown and boycotts, an emboldened China opens Games

By Sarah Dileo
Associated Press

BEIJING — China, which used its first Olympics to amplify its international aspirations, invited the world back Friday — sort of — for the pandemic era's second Games, this time as an emboldened and more powerful nation whose government's authoritarian turn provoked some countries' leaders into staying home.

Chinese President Xi Jinping declared the Games open during a ceremony heavy on ice-blue tones

and winter imagery, held in the same lattice-encased Bird's Nest stadium that hosted the inaugural event of the 2008 Summer Olympics.

Athletes Zhao Jiawen and Dinigeer Yilamujiang, a member of the country's Uyghur Muslim minority, delivered the final Olympic flame. The choice of Yilamujiang was steeped in symbolism: Critics say the Beijing government has abused and oppressed Uyghurs on a massive scale.

With the flame lit, Beijing became the first city to host both

winter and summer Games. And while some are staying away from the second pandemic Olympics in six months, many other world leaders attended the opening ceremony. Most notable: Russian President Vladimir Putin, who met privately with Xi earlier in the day as a dangerous standoff unfolded at Russia's border with Ukraine.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach addressed assembled athletes: "Dear fellow Olympians: Your

Turn to Olympics, Page 4

Safety Tip of the Day

Preparing to drive in winter weather? Review the sections of your owner's manual covering antilock brakes, traction control, and four-or all-wheel drive (if equipped) to make sure you are comfortable with their operation.

R&D

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Philadelphia	31	20	.608	—
Brooklyn	29	22	.569	2
Toronto	27	23	.540	3 1/2
Boston	28	25	.528	4
New York	24	28	.462	7 1/2
SOUTHEAST	W	L	PCT	GB
Miami	33	20	.623	—
Charlotte	28	24	.538	4 1/2
Atlanta	25	26	.490	7
Washington	24	27	.471	8
Orlando	12	41	.226	21
CENTRAL	W	L	PCT	GB
Chicago	32	19	.627	—
Milwaukee	32	21	.604	1
Cleveland	31	21	.596	1
Indiana	19	34	.358	14
Detroit	12	39	.235	20

WESTERN CONFERENCE				
SOUTHWEST	W	L	PCT	GB
Memphis	36	18	.667	—
Dallas	29	23	.558	6
New Orleans	19	32	.373	15 1/2
San Antonio	19	34	.358	16 1/2
Houston	15	36	.294	19 1/2
NORTHWEST	W	L	PCT	GB
Utah	31	21	.596	—
Denver	28	23	.549	2 1/2
Minnesota	27	25	.519	4
Portland	21	31	.404	10
Oklahoma City	16	34	.320	14
PACIFIC	W	L	PCT	GB
Phoenix	41	10	.804	—
Golden State	40	13	.755	2
L.A. Clippers	27	27	.500	15 1/2
L.A. Lakers	25	28	.472	17
Sacramento	19	35	.352	23 1/2

FRIDAY'S RESULTS
Boston at Detroit, late
Chicago at Indiana, late
Cleveland at Charlotte, late
Atlanta at Toronto, late
Houston at San Antonio, late
Brooklyn at Utah, late
New Orleans at Denver, late
Oklahoma City at Portland, late
Philadelphia at Dallas, late

SATURDAY'S GAMES
Memphis at Orlando, 5p.m.
Miami at Charlotte, 7p.m.
Phoenix at Washington, 7p.m.
New York at L.A. Lakers, 8:30p.m.
Milwaukee at Portland, 10p.m.
Oklahoma City at Sacramento, 10p.m.

SUNDAY'S GAMES
Brooklyn at Denver, 3:30p.m.
Detroit at Minnesota, 3:30p.m.
Philadelphia at Chicago, 3:30p.m.
Atlanta at Dallas, 6p.m.
Boston at Orlando, 6p.m.
Indiana at Cleveland, 6p.m.
New Orleans at Houston, 7p.m.
Milwaukee at L.A. Clippers, 9p.m.

THURSDAY'S RESULTS
Miami 112, San Antonio 95
Minnesota 128, Detroit 117
Atlanta 124, Phoenix 115
Toronto 127, Chicago 120(OT)
Golden State 126, Sacramento 114
L.A. Clippers 111, L.A. Lakers 110

NBA INDIVIDUAL LEADERS				
Through Thursday				
SCORING AVERAGE				
Player, TEAM	G	FG	FT	PTS
Durant, BKN	36	379	228	1053
Embiid, PHI	29	369	348	1134
Antetokounmpo, MIL	43	429	938	1242
Young, ATL	46	434	285	1291
DeRozan, CHI	47	450	316	1246
Morant, MEM	41	404	205	1077
Doncic, DAL	37	346	177	962
Curry, GS	48	442	209	1242
Jokic, DEN	45	447	201	1167
Tatum, BOS	49	441	252	1269
Booker, PHO	44	409	189	1123
Mitchell, UTA	40	372	148	1020
LaVine, CHI	44	389	182	1085
Towns, MIN	45	385	227	1094
Brown, BOS	39	342	149	942
Beal, WAS	40	348	169	928
Giorgio-Alexandr, OKC	43	334	241	976
Harden, BKN	44	292	304	990
Ingram, NO	37	302	171	834
Edwards, MIN	46	371	139	1028

ODDS

COLLEGE BASKETBALL	SATURDAY
FAVORITE	UNDERDOG
at Villanova 6 1/2	UConn
at Oklahoma St.2 1/2	Oklahoma
Robert Morris 8	at IUPUI
at Florida St. 1 1/2	Wake Forest
at Indiana 1	Illinois
Saint John's 1	at Butler
at Furman 12 1/2	UNC Greensboro
at Chattanooga 12	Mercer
Samford 2	at Citadel
Tennessee 7	at S. Carolina
at Saint Joseph's5	Fordham
Vermont 9 1/2	at UMass-Lowell
Northwestern 3 1/2	at Nebraska
Auburn 17 1/2	at Georgia
at Rhode Island 8	UMass
at Syracuse 6 1/2	Louisville
at N. Dakota St.1 1/2	Denver
at Xavier 12 1/2	DePaul
at N. Dakota 2 1/2	Omaha
at Texas 8	Iowa State
at Ohio 20 1/2	W. Michigan
at Saint Louis 3 1/2	Dayton
Bradley 8	at Evansville
at Temple 4	Tulsa
Texas Tech 5 1/2	at W. Virginia
Davidson 9 1/2	at Geo. Wash.
at UIC 2 1/2	Youngstown St.
at Kent St. 9 1/2	E. Michigan
at Hofstra 7 1/2	JMU
George Mason 4	at La Salle
at Tulane 7 1/2	E. Carolina
Clemson 2 1/2	at Georgia Tech
Towson 6	at Northeastern
at Georgia St. 2	S. Alabama
at Wake Forest 8	E. Tenn. St.
at Purdue 9	Michigan
at NC State 1	Notre Dame
at SF Austin 12	Dixie State
at Rice 3	UTEP
at Sam Houston 2	Utah Valley
UL Monroe 2	at UALR
at Florida 8	Mississippi
at UAB 11	Middle Tennessee
N. Colorado 5	at N. Arizona
Washington St. 6 1/2	at California
at UCSB 8 1/2	UCSD
at Texas A&M 9	Missouri
UNC Wilmington5	at William & Mary
at Charlotte 3	Marshall
at Kansas 2 1/2	Baylor
at Abil. Christian11	Rio Grande Valley
Fla. Atlantic15	S. Mississippi
at Morehead St.12 1/2	Austin Peay
at VCU 11 1/2	Duquesne
Charleston 3	at Elon
at Ga. Southern 2	Troy
Buffalo 11	at C. Michigan
at UT Martin 3	Tennessee St.
at Arkansas St. 11	Louisiana
at Arizona 2	USC
at Bowling Green8	Northern Illinois
Jackson State 9 1/2	at Miss. Valley St.
FGCU 1 1/2	at Lipscomb
New Orleans 8 1/2	at Incarnate Word
at Virginia 3 1/2	Miami
at SE Missouri St.13	E. Illinois
Longwood 11 1/2	at Charl. Southern
Winthrop 8 1/2	at Hampton
at Wisconsin 8 1/2	Penn State
at Colorado 2	Oregon State
Alcorn State 9	at UABP
at Southern 12 1/2	Alabama A&M
Liberty 6 1/2	at E. Kentucky
at Bellarmine 5 1/2	Kennesaw State
at High Point 2 1/2	UNC Asheville
SE Louisiana 5 1/2	at Houston Baptist

NFL SUPER BOWL LVI
FAVORITE SP O/U **UNDERDOG**
LA Rams 4 (48 1/2) at Cincinnati

For the latest odds, go to
FanDuel Sportsbook,
https://sportsbook.fanduel.com/

NHL										
EASTERN CONFERENCE										
ATLANTIC	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA			
Florida	47	32	10	5	69	194	139			
Tampa Bay	46	30	10	6	66	157	130			
Toronto	42	29	10	3	61	153	112			
Boston	42	29	14	3	55	131	120			
Detroit	47	20	21	6	46	130	162			
Buffalo	45	14	24	7	35	117	157			
Ottawa	40	14	22	4	32	110	136			
Montreal	44	8	29	7	23	99	172			
METRO.	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA			
Carolina	42	31	9	2	64	147	98			
N.Y. Rangers	47	30	13	4	64	145	122			
Pittsburgh	46	27	11	8	62	154	124			
Washington	45	23	15	9	59	152	130			
Columbus	43	20	22	1	41	136	159			
N.Y. Islanders	39	16	17	6	38	93	105			
Philadelphia	45	15	22	8	38	113	152			
New Jersey	45	15	25	5	35	126	163			

WESTERN CONFERENCE										
CENTRAL	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA			
Colorado	44	32	8	4	68	183	129			
Nashville	46	28	14	4	60	144	125			
Minnesota	41	28	10	3	59	161	120			
St. Louis	44	26	13	5	57	153	121			
Dallas	43	23	18	2	48	129	131			
Winnipeg	42	18	17	7	43	120	128			
Chicago	46	23	17	7	39	112	156			
Arizona	45	11	30	4	26	99	169			
PACIFIC	GP	W	L	OT	PTS	GF	GA			
Vegas	46	27	16	3	57	158	137			
Los Angeles	47	24	16	7	55	136	130			
Anaheim	48	23	16	9	55	141	137			
Calgary	42	23	13	6	52	136	104			
Edmonton	42	23	16	3	49	142	138			
San Jose	46	22	20	4	48	126	142			
Vancouver	46	20	20	6	46	115	126			
Seattle	45	16	27	4	34	121	159			

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

THURSDAY-SUNDAY
All-Star break

ALL-STAR COMPETITIONS
T-Mobile Arena, LAS VEGAS
Friday: Skills Challenge
FASTEST SKATER
Jordan Kyrou (St. Louis) 13.550 econds.
SAVE STREAK
Andrei Vasilevskiy (TB) 9
Jack Campbell (Tor),
FOUNTAIN FACE-OFF
Zach Werenski (CLB) 25.634 secs.
- Hardest Shot
- Breakaway Challenge
- Accuracy Shooting
Saturday: All-Star Game, 3 p.m.

MONDAY'S GAMES
Carolina at Toronto, 7 p.m.
New Jersey at Ottawa, 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS
Seattle 3, N.Y. Islanders 0
Edmonton 5, Washington 3
Los Angeles 5, Detroit 3
Calgary 4, Arizona 2
Minnesota 5, Chicago 0

NFL PLAYOFFS

SUPER BOWL LVI
Sunday, Feb. 13, at SoFi Stadium, Inglewood, Calif.
No. 4 L.A. Rams (15-5) vs.
No. 4 Cincinnati (13-7), 6:30 p.m.

PRO BOWL
Sunday at Allegiant Stadium, Las Vegas, 3 p.m.

PLAYOFF TOP PERFORMERS	
PASSING	
404: Patrick Mahomes II, KC vs. PIT	1/16 (30-39, 5 TD)
378: Patrick Mahomes II, KC vs. BUF	1/23 (OT) (33-44, 3 TD)
366: Matthew Stafford, LAR at TB	1/23 (28-38, 2 TD)
348: Joe Burrow, CIN at TEN	1/22 (28-37, 0 TD)
337: Matthew Stafford, LAR vs. SF	1/30 (31-43, 2 TD)
329: Josh Allen, BUF at KC	1/23 (OT) (27-37, 4 TD)
329: Tom Brady, TB vs. LAR	1/23 (30-54, 1 TD)
310: Derek Carr, LAS at CIN	1/15 (29-54, 1 TD)
308: Josh Allen, BUF vs. NE	1/15 (21-25, 5 TD)
RUSHING	
96: Elijah Mietholl, SF at DAL	1/16 (27 car., 0 TD)
88: Joe Mixon, CIN at KC	1/30 (21 car., 0 TD)
83: Josh Jacobs, OAK at CIN	1/15 (13 car, 0 TD)
81: Devin Singletary, BUF vs. NE	1/15 (16 car., 2 TD)
72: Deebo Samuel, SF at DAL	1/16 (10 car TD)

SOCCER

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE				
CLUB	GP	W	D	L GF GAPS
Man City	23	18	3	2 55 14 57
Liverpool	22	14	6	2 58 19 48
Chelsea	24	13	8	3 48 18 47
Man United	22	11	6	5 36 30 38
West Ham	23	11	4	8 41 31 37
Arsenal	21	11	3	7 33 25 36
Tottenham	20	11	3	6 26 24 36
Wolverhampton	21	10	4	7 19 16 34
Brighton	22	6	12	21 28 32 26
Leicester	20	7	5	8 34 37 26
Aston Villa	21	8	2	11 28 32 26
Southampton	22	5	10	7 26 34 25
Crystal Palace	22	5	9	8 31 34 24
Brentford	23	6	5	12 26 38 23
Leeds	21	5	7	9 24 40 22
Everton	20	5	4	11 24 35 19
Norwich	22	4	4	14 13 45 16
Newcastle	21	2	9	10 21 43 15
Watford	20	4	2	14 23 40 14
Burnley	18	1	9	8 16 27 12

SATURDAY'S MATCH
Burnley vs. Watford, 1p.m.

TUESDAY'S MATCHES
West Ham vs. Watford, 2:45p.m.
Newcastle vs. Everton, 2:45p.m.
Burnley vs. Man United, 3p.m.

WEDNESDAY'S MATCHES
Norwich vs. Crystal Palace, 2:45p.m.
Tottenham vs. Southampton, 2:45p.m.
Man City vs. Brentford, 2:45p.m.
Aston Villa vs. Leeds, 3p.m.</

SPORTS

GIANTS COMMENTARY

Flores: Belichick had ‘back channel’ influence on hiring of Daboll

By Dennis Young
New York Daily News

NEW YORK — Brian Flores made a somewhat obvious statement about the Giants’ hiring of Brian Daboll as head coach: It was influenced by their mutual old boss, Bill Belichick, whose bumbling text messages ultimately led to Flores suing the NFL and three teams for racist hiring practices. “I do think that there are back channel conversations and back channel meetings that are had that oftentimes influence decisions. I think that’s is a clear example of that,” he said of the Giants hiring Daboll and, per the Belichick texts,

possibly landing on him before Flores was even interviewed. “There’s Bill Belichick, his resume speaks for itself. He has influence. It was clear that that decision was made with his influence. That’s part of the problem. That needs to change. There needs to be a fair and equal opportunity to interview and showcase your abilities to lead and earn one of those positions,” Flores said on Jay Williams’ NPR podcast. Flores and Daboll were both former Patriots assistants, with Flores rising on Belichick’s defensive staff from 2008 to 2018 and Daboll working several stints on both sides of the ball from 2000-06 and 2013-16. Not getting Belichick’s

perspective on his two former longtime aides would be malpractice; it seems what Flores objects to is Belichick putting his thumb on the scale for yet another white coach. The irony here is that the Giants are no stranger to pursuing Belichick assistants, hiring Joe Judge off Belichick’s staff in 2020 and trying to lure Matt Patricia before getting rejected in 2018. Belichick gave Giants ownership a droll endorsement of Judge — “He’s better than the last two guys you hired” — who ended up producing the same two-year failure as Ben McAdoo and Pat Shurmur and generally flamed out like most coaches do after getting promoted

from a Patriots job. Along with Bill O’Brien, Flores is arguably one of only two former Belichick assistants to be anything better than a complete disaster as an NFL head coach. There’s nothing wrong with asking a successful coach about his staff. But maybe NFL teams could make an exception for ignoring Bill Belichick’s advice. Meanwhile, the Giants denied all the allegations, including any influence by Belichick, in a statement released Thursday evening. Flores claimed he had several “sham” interviews for head coach jobs, including with the Giants, after he was fired from the Dolphins in January. He claims he

was only interviewed for those jobs so the teams could fulfill Rooney Rule requirements that minority candidates be interviewed and was never seriously considered for those open positions. “Brian Flores has raised serious issues in the filing of his complaint. The specific claims against the Giants and Mr. Flores’ allegations about the legitimacy of his candidacy for our head coach position are disturbing and simply false,” the team said. The team claims it conducted its interviews for head coach appropriately and only decided on Daboll on Jan. 28, more than a day after Flores’ second interview with the team.

UP NEXT

UConn MBB: at Villanova, Saturday, noon; Marquette (XL), Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.; at Xavier, Friday, 7 p.m.
UConn WBB: Tennessee (XL), Sunday, noon; Villanova (XL), Wednesday, 7 p.m.; DePaul (Gampel), Friday, 7 p.m.
Celtics: at Magic, Sunday, 6 p.m.; at Nets, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.; Nuggets, Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Knicks: at Lakers, Saturday, 8:30 p.m.; at Jazz, Monday, 9 p.m.; at Nuggets, Tuesday, 9 p.m.
Nets: at Nuggets, Sunday, 3:30 p.m.; Celtics, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.; at Wizards, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
UConn hockey: at New Hampshire, Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; at Merrimack, Tuesday, 7 p.m.; at Boston Coll., Friday, 7 p.m.
Bruins: Penguins, Tuesday, 7 p.m.; Hurricanes, Thursday, 7 p.m.; at Senators, Feb. 12, 12:30 p.m.
Rangers: Bruins, Feb. 15, 7 p.m.; Red Wings, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.; at Senators, Feb. 20, 5 p.m.
Wolf Pack: Lehigh Valley, Saturday, 5 p.m.; Springfield, Friday, 7 p.m.; Rochester, Feb. 12, 7 p.m.

TV/RADIO

AUTO RACING

8:30 p.m.: NASCAR Cup Series Busch Light Clash at The Coliseum, Heat Qualifying. (Live) FS1

BASKETBALL

12 p.m.: Connecticut at Villanova. (Live) FOX
12 p.m.: Illinois at Indiana. (Live) ESPN
12 p.m.: Oklahoma at Oklahoma State. (Live) ESPN2
12 p.m.: Mercer at UT-Chattanooga. (Live) ESPNU
12 p.m.: St. John’s at Butler. (Live) FS1
1 p.m.: Tennessee at South Carolina. (Live) CBS
1 p.m.: Auburn at Georgia. (Live) SEC
2 p.m.: East Tennessee State at Wofford. (Live) CBSSN
2 p.m.: Teams TBA. (Live) ESPN ESPN2 ESPNU
2 p.m.: DePaul at Xavier. (Live) FS1
2:30 p.m.: Michigan at Purdue. (Live) FOX
3 p.m.: Notre Dame at NC State. (Live) ACC
3:30 p.m.: Ole Miss at Florida. (Live) SEC
4 p.m.: UNC-Wilmington at William & Mary. (Live) CBSSN
4 p.m.: Baylor at Kansas. (Live) ESPN
4 p.m.: Missouri at Texas A&M. (Live) ESPN2
4 p.m.: Michigan State at Rutgers. (Live) FS1
4:30 p.m.: Texas Southern at Florida A&M. (Live) NBA
5 p.m.: USC at Arizona. (Live) FOX
6 p.m.: LSU at Vanderbilt. (Live) SEC
6 p.m.: UNLV at Utah State. (Live) CBSSN
6 p.m.: Duke at North Carolina. (Live) ESPN
6 p.m.: SMU at Wichita State. (Live) ESPN2
6 p.m.: Northern Iowa at Drake. (Live) ESPNU
6 p.m.: Oregon State at Colorado. (Live) FS1
7 p.m.: Virginia Tech at Pittsburgh. (Live) ACC
8 p.m.: New Mexico at Air Force. (Live) CBSSN
8 p.m.: Kentucky at Alabama. (Live) ESPN
8 p.m.: Teams TBA. (Live) ESPN2 ESPNU
8:30 p.m.: Knicks at Lakers. (Live) ABC
8:30 p.m.: Mississippi State at Arkansas. (Live) SEC
9:30 p.m.: Oregon at Utah. (Live) FS1
10 p.m.: Loyola Marymount at Saint Mary’s. (Live) CBSSN
10 p.m.: Gonzaga at BYU. (Live) ESPN
10 p.m.: UCLA at Arizona State. (Live) ESPN2

BOXING

7 p.m.: PBC Fight Night: Abel Ramos vs. Luke Santamaria. (Live) FOX

FOOTBALL

2:30 p.m.: Reese’s Senior Bowl. (Live) NFL
1 a.m.: Virginia at Miami. (Taped) ACC

GOLF

1 p.m.: AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, Third Round. (Live) GOLF
3 p.m.: AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, Third Round. (Live) CBS
3:30 a.m.: Asian Tour Golf PIF Saudi International, Final Round. (Live) GOLF

GYMNASTICS

4 p.m.: Women’s College: Auburn at LSU. (Live) ESPNU

HOCKEY

3 p.m.: 2022 NHL All-Star Game (Live) ABC SPRTNET
7:30 p.m.: College: UConn at New Hampshire. (Live), Radio: 97.9
9:30 p.m.: 2022 NHL All-Star Skills Competition (Taped) NHL

MOTORCYCLE RACING

10 p.m.: AMA Supercross Monster Energy Series, Round 5. (Live) CNBC

OLYMPICS

6 a.m.: Beijing 2022 Morning. (Live) SPRTNET
6:30 a.m.: Freestyle Skiing. (Live) USA
8:10 a.m.: Women’s Hockey - U.S. vs ROC. (Live) USA
10:30 a.m.: Luge. (Same-day Tape) USA
12 p.m.: Beijing 2022 Daytime - The Hockey Show. (Live) SPRTNET
12 p.m.: Biathlon. (Same-day Tape) USA
1:30 p.m.: Ski Jumping. (Same-day Tape) USA
2 p.m.: Cross Country Skiing, Luge, Speed Skating, Ski Jumping. (Same-day Tape) NBC
2:30 p.m.: Short Track. (Same-day Tape) USA
4 p.m.: Mixed Doubles Curling - China vs U.S. (Same-day Tape) CNBC
6 p.m.: Mixed Doubles Curling - U.S. vs Canada. (Same-day Tape) CNBC
8 p.m.: Short Track, Figure Skating, Alpine Skiing. (Live) NBC
8 p.m.: Beijing 2022 Primetime. (Live) SPRTNET
8 p.m.: Mixed Doubles Curling - U.S. vs Czech Republic. (Live) CNBC
8:30 p.m.: Snowboarding. (Live) USA
11 p.m.: Alpine Skiing. (Live) USA
11:30 p.m.: Snowboarding. (Live) USA
12 a.m.: Snowboarding, Freestyle Skiing. (Same-day Tape) NBC
12 a.m.: Beijing 2022 Tonight. (Live) SPRTNET
1:35 a.m.: (Same-day Tape) USA
2 a.m.: Cross-Country Skiing. (Live) USA
3:35 a.m.: Speed Skating. (Live) USA

SOCCER
8 a.m.: Italian Serie B Soccer Como vs Lecce. (Live) FSP
11:30 a.m.: FIFA Club World Cup Soccer Al-Ahly vs Monterrey. (Live) FSP
12 p.m.: Italian Serie A Soccer Inter Milan vs AC Milan. (Live) CBSSN
7:55 p.m.: Fútbol Mexicano Primera División (Live) UNI
9:55 p.m.: Fútbol Mexicano Primera División (Live) UNI



Celtics center Robert Williams III blocks a shot by Pistons forward Kelly Olynyk in the second half Friday in Detroit. **PAUL SANCYA/AP**

WNBA

Former UConn star Charles signs with Mercury

By Alexa Philippou
Hartford Courant

WNBA free agency just got quite interesting.

Tina Charles, a 6-foot-4 forward who led the league in scoring in 2021, signed with the three-time champion Phoenix Mercury, the franchise announced Friday. The two-time champion at UConn, 2012 WNBA MVP and eight-time WNBA All-Star is looking to win her first WNBA title with Mercury, who fell to the Chicago Sky in the WNBA Finals last season. Charles reportedly took a pay cut and is earning just \$108,000 on a protected one-year deal, according to Winsidr’s Rachel Galligan.

“Tina is an elite talent in our league and adding a player of her caliber is another example of our commitment to our fans and players to pursue a championship every year,” Mercury general manager Jim Pitman said in a statement. “Tina has made it clear that she wants to win and wants to do so in Phoenix.

“For us, this move is about adding absolute top-end talent into our frontcourt which already features what we consider the most dominant player in the game in BG [Brittney Griner] and the league’s best defender in Brianna Turner. We expect to be able to play all three fewer minutes, which should benefit us in the playoffs.”

After previously playing for the Connecticut Sun, New York Liberty and Washington Mystics, Charles will join forces with fellow former Husky Diana Taurasi, Skylar Diggins-Smith, Griner and new Phoenix addition Diamond DeShields.

Charles, a nine-time All-WNBA pick, has experience playing with Taurasi, Griner and Diggins-Smith with USA Basketball.

Kia Nurse, who is coming off an ACL tear, has yet to officially re-sign with Phoenix but was extended a qualifying offer by the team.

CELTICS 102, PISTONS 93

Tatum scores 24 as Boston snags 4th straight victory

Associated Press

DETROIT — Jayson Tatum scored 24 points in 28 minutes, and the Boston Celtics extended their winning streak to four games with a 102-93 victory over the Detroit Pistons on Friday night.

Jaylen Brown scored 13 points for the Celtics, who won for the sixth time in seven games. Josh Richardson scored 12 points and Robert Williams had 11 points, 11 rebounds and five blocks for Boston, which never trailed and led by as many as 24 points.

Hamidou Diallo had 21 points and 14 rebounds as Detroit wrapped up a four-game homestand and lost for the seventh time in eight games. Saddiq Bey scored 21 points and Jerami Grant added 10 points.

Boston held Detroit to a season-low point total in the first half and led 46-31 at the break. The Pistons’ previous first-half low was 37 points

against the New York Knicks on Dec. 21.

Tatum scored 19 points in the third quarter as the Celtics led 78-56 heading into the fourth quarter.

Tip-ins: Detroit rookie guard Cade Cunningham, the top pick in last year’s draft, missed his second consecutive game due to a right hip pointer. “It’s nothing serious, but we’re going to be cautious with it,” coach Dwane Casey said. “He’s just got to get those muscles in his behind firing the right way and the soreness out.” ... The Pistons were also missing guard Josh Jackson (right lumbar spine spasm). ... Celtics forward Al Horford was held out in the fourth quarter due to a sore right foot.

The Celtics have won seven of their last nine games on Detroit’s home court ... The teams will play three more times over the next five weeks — in Detroit on Feb. 26 and in Boston on Feb. 16 and March 11.

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MEN'S BASKETBALL
Saturday: at Villanova,
noon, FOX

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
Sunday: vs. Tennessee (at
XL Center), noon, FOX

UConn
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UConn's Adama Sanogo, right, strips the ball from Creighton's Alex O'Connell in the second half Tuesday at the XL Center. Creighton won, 59-55. **CLOE POISSON/SPECIAL TO THE COURANT**

Huskies

from Page 1

long and plays really hard," he said. "Very similar to the Marquette team we just played."

The Huskies' length on defense could pose major issues for the Wildcats.

"They have a lot of length," said guard Jermaine Samuels. "They have (Adama) Sanogo down there. They have (Akok) Akok, (Isaiah) Whaley and R.J. Cole, who is a ballhawk. They have a lot of guys that can be disruptive."

The UConn-Villanova rivalry is historic, something not lost on Wildcats guard Collin Gillespie, who led his team with 20 points in a 68-60 win over UConn on Feb. 20, 2021.

"They're a great team and great program," he said. "We know how successful they have been. They came right back into the Big East and have been successful since they came back. We know how tough their teams are and how physical they play. It's going to be fun. It's always a battle with those guys."

According to Wright, guard Justin Moore is questionable for the game with an ankle injury.

With or without Moore, Wright expects UConn to press and he wants his team to respond aggressively. On the defensive end, he wants his team to stick with their guys and rebound better.

"We talked about finishing our possessions and everybody matched up," he said. "We were overhelping (against Marquette) and getting out of position. That was hurting our rebounding."

"That's something UConn does a great job of. They run some really good cuts offensively that can get you out of position, then they go and attack

the offensive glass. We've really got to be smart about that."

On Friday, Huskies' Sanogo was named on the 10-player watch list for the 2022 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Center of the Year Award. The annual award recognizes the best center in men's college basketball.

Here's everything you need to know about the matchup:

The basics

Site: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia

Time: 12 p.m., Saturday

Series: Villanova leads 37-31

Last meeting: Villanova won, 68-60,

on Feb. 20, 2021, at Gampel Pavilion.

TV: FS1 (Gus Johnson, Jim Jackson)

Live Stream: Fox Sports app

Radio: UConn Sports Network (Mike

Crispino, Wayne Norman). XM-201.

Sirius-137. XM-201. SXM app-964.

97.9-ESPN Hartford. WILI-1400-AM

(Willimantic). WATR-1320-AM

(Waterbury). WAVZ-1300-AM (New

Haven). WGCH-1490-AM

(Greenwich).

No. 12 Villanova (16-6, 9-3 Big East) probable starters, sixth man

Collin Gillespie, G, 6-3, Gr.; Brandon

Slater, F, 6-7, Sr.; Justin Moore, G, 6-4,

Jr.; Jermaine Samuels, F, 6-7, Gr.; Eric

Dixon, F, 6-8, So.; Caleb Daniels, G, 6-4,

Sr.;

No. 17 UConn (15-5, 6-3) probable starters, sixth man

R.J. Cole, G, 6-1, GS; Isaiah Whaley, F,

6-9, GS; Adama Sanogo, F, 6-9, So.;

Tyrese Martin, G/F, 6-6, Sr.; Andre

Jackson, G/F, 6-6, So.; Jordan Hawkins,

G, 6-5, Fr.

The matchup

UConn's offense: The Huskies need to take care of the ball as Villanova ranks No. 6 in Division I in steal percentage with 6.6%, according to KenPom. Overall, the offense needs to take more deliberate shots and avoid a slow start.

UConn's defense: The biggest focus will be guarding the speedy Villanova guards off the dribble and making sure if they get by, the help defense rotates. If they get fouled, the Wildcats will convert from more often not as they lead Division I, shooting 82.5% from the free throw line.

Villanova's offense: Gillespie leads the team in scoring with 17.1 points per game while shooting 42.4% from the beyond the arc, so he will be the primary focus. He had 16 points on 5-for-15 shooting from the field in the game against Marquette. Overall, the offense does a great job of taking care of the ball with just 9.5 turnovers, tied for sixth in Division I.

Villanova defense: According to KenPom, the Wildcats have 91.9 defensive efficiency, ranking No. 21 in Division I. The Wildcats' defense will be a good test for a UConn offense that has struggled lately.

UConn's key: Don't start slow offensively; make somebody beside Gillespie beat them.

Player to watch: Cole. How he plays on offense and defends the Villanova guards could be pivotal in the game's outcome.

About Villanova's coach: Jay Wright is in his 21st season coaching Wildcats. He was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2021.

Villanova's mascot: Wildcat. It was chosen in 1926.

Villanova famous alumni: Current NBA player Kyle Lowry.

Shreyas Laddha can be reached at sladdha@courant.com.

Amore

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you get everyone's best shot. That's how it's been for four years. [Saturday] should be exciting, noon top-off, big crowd, 18,000, that's an atmosphere you want to play in."

This season, the Huskies have a win at Marquette, which has been the surprise in the conference, but lost their chance to get some measure of revenge against Creighton, and lost before a packed XL Center against conference front-runner Providence on Dec. 18.

So this game at Villanova is more for the psyche than the NET Ranking. UConn is No. 17 in NetRankings, second highest in the Big East to Nova at No. 7. That's positive territory to get an NCAA Tournament berth, barring the kind of tailspin that is always a danger in a league this strong top to bottom. To solidify their position and start talking about a favorable seed, UConn needs to end the program's long drought against the Wildcats.

"We've got a lot of guys who have been in college for like five years and they've never beaten Villanova," Adama Sanogo said. "This is a big chance for us. I think we're going to ... we're going to win."

Starting with a three-year nonconference series and spilling over into Year One in the Big East, UConn has lost to Villanova four years in a row. A split of the two games this season would play just fine, but a win Saturday and UConn would be under much less pressure when the Wildcats come to Hartford on Feb. 22.

Again, let's avoid the metrics and talk intuition. It just *feels* like it's time for UConn to win a game of this magnitude. Providence may be 29th in NET Rankings, but the Friars are 5-1 against Quadrant One opponents, while UConn is 2-4. Villanova is coming off a loss to Marquette and will be as tenacious as ever; UConn must match it. It's time.

"I don't know that there is any one individual team we feel we have to get over the hump against," Hurley said. "Right now, we need to win a game and this would be a big win."

The women, to an even greater degree than the men, are always chasing their past. Without the injuries that have befallen them, the Huskies would likely be in their familiar place among the nation's elite. As it is, the Huskies are ranked 10th, 14-4 overall, 9-0 in the conference and on a five-game winning streak. With each step the TV cameras catch Paige Bueckers walking without a crutch, there is hope. Since her

"We've got a lot of guys who have been in college for like five years and they've never beaten Villanova. This is a big chance for us. I think we're going to ... we're going to win."

— *Adama Sanogo*

knee injury Dec. 5, the win over Notre Dame that day remains UConn's last significant nonconference victory.

They lost to South Carolina with Bueckers, to Georgia Tech, Louisville and Oregon without her. A win over Tennessee with the current cast would go a long way toward establishing what this team could ultimately be with their best player.

A basketball team is a mosaic, but until the end it can only be viewed one tile at a time. Several of those tiles have been painful to the eyes of the UConn women's basketball fan, but maybe, if you paid attention to the right groundhog, better days are closer. Through their injuries, UConn has seen freshman Caroline Ducharme get better and better; watched as Olivia Nelson-Ododa has become more aggressive. Azzi Fudd is back, and taking steps.

Now, imagine dropping Bueckers into that formula. Imagine — dare we say it? — the bench strength. It could be something special, even by the lofty standards, if there is enough time for them to get acclimated to playing together before the tournament. This game against Tennessee, aside from the spectacle of the rivalry, can spring UConn to a better position and show some progress since the loss at Oregon.

There has already been a positive development. The decision to postpone the game against Butler Friday due to weather spared the Huskies from having to play a ridiculous four games in eight days.

Throw it all in the crock-pot and this has the makings of a consequential weekend for UConn basketball, a weekend the two sets of fans could look back to and say, "That's where it turned around." Or the results could be more subtle than seismic. Their seasons will still be alive, their goals still on the table come Monday, but we will know a lot more about them.

Dom Amore can be reached at damore@courant.com

Olympics

from Page 1

Olympic stage is set."

An Olympic opening ceremony typically provides the host nation a chance to showcase its culture, define its place in the world, flaunt its best side. That's something China in particular has been consumed with for decades. But at this year's Beijing Games, the gulf between performance and reality is shaping up to be particularly jarring.

Fourteen years ago, a Beijing opening ceremony that featured massive pyrotechnic displays and thousands of card-flipping performers set a new standard of extravagance to start an Olympics that no host since has matched. It was a fitting start to an event often billed as China's "coming out."

Now, no matter how you view

it, China has arrived — but the hope for a more open country that accompanied those first Games has faded.

In the runup to the Olympics, China's suppression of dissent was also on display in the controversy surrounding Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai. She disappeared from public view last year after accusing a former Communist Party official of sexual assault. Her accusation was quickly scrubbed from the internet, and discussion of it remains heavily censored.

In the shadow of those political issues, China put on its show. As Xi took his seat, the performers turned toward him and repeatedly bowed. A simultaneous cheer went up as they raised their pom poms toward their president — China's most powerful leader since Mao Zedong, who established the People's Repub-

lic in 1949. A barrage of fireworks, including some that spelled out "Spring," announced that the festivities were at hand.

A line of people dressed in costumes representing China's varied ethnicities passed the national flag to the pole where it was raised — a show of unity the country often puts on as part of its narrative that its wide range of ethnic groups live together in peace and prosperity.

But politics still elbowed its way into the proceedings. The parade of athletes from Taiwan — the island democracy that China says belongs to it but that competes separately as "Chinese Taipei" — was greeted with a cheer from the crowd, as were the Russian competitors. An overcoated Putin stood and waved at the delegation, nodding crisply as they marched.

The stadium was relatively full,

though by no means at capacity, after authorities decided to allow a select group to attend events.

As with any Olympics, attention will shift Saturday — at least partially — from the geopolitical issues of the day to the athletes themselves.

All eyes turn now to whether Alpine skiing superstar Mikaela Shiffrin, who already owns three Olympic medals, can exceed sky-high expectations. How snowboard sensation Shaun White will cap off his Olympic career — and if the sport's current standard-bearer, Chloe Kim, will wow us again. And whether Russia's women will sweep the medals in figure skating.

And China is pinning its hopes on Eileen Gu, the 18-year-old, American-born freestyle skier who has chosen to compete for her mother's native country and could win three gold medals.

UConn

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their ticket for upper-level seats at the UConn-Tennessee game this Sunday "regardless of original ticket value, while supplies last." Patrons can bring their Butler game tickets to the XL Center box office prior to tip to execute the exchange.

The school added that those who purchased a three-game mini-plan or single-game ticket to the Butler game can use their same game tickets for the matchup if it's rescheduled. If not, patrons can select from available tickets to another remaining home game.

Season ticket holders will maintain access to their seats if the game is rescheduled. If not, UConn will credit season ticket holders' accounts at the end of the season.

Did you know?

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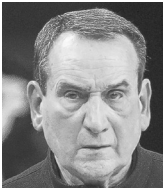
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NATIONAL SPORTS REPORT

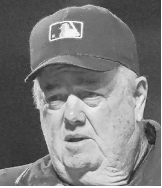
SHORTS

Last trip to battle UNC for Coach K



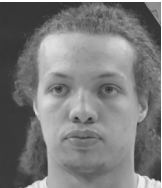
The famed rivalry between No. 9 Duke and North Carolina is changing. One Hall of Fame coach is gone, with the Tar Heels' Roy Williams retiring last spring and former UNC player and assistant Hubert Davis replacing him. On Saturday, outgoing Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski will make his final trip to Chapel Hill for the annual showdown. Davis' debut and Krzyzewski's latest stop on his farewell tour add another dynamic as the rivals fight for position atop the ACC. "I wouldn't say it's pressure," Duke big man Mark Williams said of Krzyzewski's UNC finale. "Obviously the stakes are a little different, but we're still playing the same game." But the focus will be on the sidelines. In 42 seasons at Duke, Krzyzewski battled against late Hall of Famer Dean Smith, and he's been a constant while UNC moved from Smith to Bill Guthridge to Matt Doherty and 18 seasons under Williams. He coached Duke in the first game at the Smith Center in January 1986. "We've had so many amazing games, some that we've won and some that we've lost. But they've been really high-level games," Krzyzewski said.

Longtime MLB ump West retires



Joe West has made it official, retiring from Major League Baseball after umpiring a record 5,460 regular-season games. The 69-year-old West worked his first big league game on Sept. 14, 1976, at third base in Atlanta when the Braves hosted the Houston Astros. His finale was on Oct. 6, when he worked home plate at Dodger Stadium for the NL wild-card game between the Dodgers and the Cardinals. Known as Country Joe, West set the record for regular-season games last May 25, when he worked the plate when the Chicago White Sox hosted the Cardinals. NL umpire Bill Klem had held the record following in a career that spanned 1905-41. Roberto Ortiz became the first Puerto Rican-born umpire to join the big league staff in a series of retirements and promotions announced Friday by MLB. "I am honored and blessed to have the privilege of becoming the first Puerto Rican umpire to be hired by MLB," the 37-year-old Ortiz said. "It fills me with pride to be able to represent my family and my island of Puerto Rico in what I consider the best league in the world."

Player arrested in spitting incident



UCLA men's basketball player Mac Etienne was arrested and cited on suspicion of misdemeanor assault after appearing to spit toward a fan after the Bruins lost a road game to Pac-12 rival Arizona, a University of Arizona police spokesman said Friday. The alleged incident occurred Thursday night as UCLA players left the McKale Center playing floor and entered a tunnel to go to their locker room, said the spokesman, Officer Jesus Aguilar. Etienne was allowed to go to the locker room and was then arrested, cited and released, Aguilar said. Local media outlets reported that fans jeered UCLA players when the incident occurred. The Wildcats beat the Bruins 76-66. UCLA officials knew of the incident and were reviewing it, university spokesman Scott Markley said in a statement. "UCLA Athletics is committed to and expects the highest level of sportsmanship," the statement said. Etienne, a redshirt freshman, was not in uniform and did not play in the game. It wasn't clear whether saliva landed on any fans but the misdemeanor assault charge alleges intent, Aguilar said. —AP



Rollerbladers move in unison at a Winter Olympics Culture Plaza in a district of Shijingshan in Beijing on Friday. **SAM MCNEIL/AP**

WINTER OLYMPICS

The stage has been set

Beijing excited, dismisses controversy as Games begin

Associated Press

As the lights flashed on the Bird's Nest, the stadium designed for the previous Olympics in China, 63-year old Liu Wenbin was just one of many excited Beijing residents eager for the Games to begin. It didn't matter that Beijing had just held the Olympics 14 years ago, or that the country had to artificially construct snow, or that the U.S. and several other Western countries were staging a diplomatic boycott over Beijing's internment of a large part of its minority Uyghur population. Many Chinese were filled with pride — like Liu, who filmed the opening ceremony on his phone as he watched from home in western Beijing. "As a Chinese person, I feel incomparably proud," Liu said. "Our great China really is No. 1. Even when the pandemic is so severe, we're still able to hold this highly anticipated international event, the Winter Olympics." Liu, a retiree from Beijing, was unable to see the event up close this year as tickets were only available to select groups owing to pandemic prevention measures. In 2008, he was too busy at work to snag tickets to Beijing's Summer Games. Even though the Olympics are being held with strict COVID-19 prevention measures, there was still a festive air in the capital city. At the Winter Olympics Culture Plaza in Beijing, neighborhood dance troupes performed as families gathered to join in the excitement.

"This Winter Olympics, it's like an international festival, and as a volunteer, it's a hugely important thing for me as a college student, and even in my life," said Zhang Xinrui, a college senior who was volunteering at the event. "You can hear from my voice how excited and how happy I am." "I hope that our athletes do well, and together show the world our future," said Liu Jingyun, 69, who was part of a group of dancers performing with flat taiping drums, decorated with snowflakes. **Chances at politicking abound** For all the talk of a diplomatic boycott, Chinese leader Xi Jinping has managed to attract a globe-spanning roster of presidents, royals and other dignitaries to the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics. The fact that most of them represent countries that are unlikely to win any medals — if they're even competing at all — doesn't seem to matter. What does, from Beijing's perspective, is presenting an image that China has emerged as a global power whose authoritarian style of government can compete in a world dominated by the U.S. and its fellow democracies. "There is a strong authoritarian tilt among the list of leaders attending," said Andrew Yeo, a politics professor at The Catholic University of America and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. "It's a much different list of global leaders when compared with the attendees of Biden's Summit for Democracy last December."

The guest list for Friday includes Russia's Vladimir Putin, whose tens of thousands of troops are poised for a possible invasion of Ukraine. Also here: the heads of a good chunk of the rest of the former Soviet Union and the unelected rulers of several energy-rich Gulf Arab states. That leaves plenty of room for diplomatic intrigue and backroom deal-making for those making the trip. One side effect of the pandemic has been to make face time with Xi more valuable than ever — even if it must be done behind a mask. The Chinese leader hasn't been abroad in more than two years. His country has sharply limited international travel while pursuing a zero-tolerance policy in fighting the virus. So anyone who wants to meet Xi, China's most powerful leader in decades, or other top officials like Premier Li Keqiang in person has to make the trip — no matter how powerful they are at home. And so they are coming, from Argentina and Egypt, from Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan. **Showtime for NBC** Overall, NBC plans to show more than 2,800 hours of coverage across its channels and platforms. Those include NBC, USA, CNBC, NBCOlympics.com and the streaming app Peacock. According to the network, this year's Olympics will be the first to include coverage of all events both live and on demand. Several sports, including hockey and figure skating, started before the opening ceremony began, but no medals will be awarded until Saturday, the first full day of competition.

SUPER BOWL 56 BENGALS

McPherson on a record playoff run

By Josh Dubow
Associated Press

Joe Burrow knew Evan McPherson must be a special kicker if the Bengals were willing to spend a fifth-round pick on a position usually filled by undrafted players and journeyman. But the Bengals targeted McPherson and made him the only kicker taken in the 2021 draft, a decision that has been validated by one of the NFL's greatest postseason kicking runs. "Obviously kickers aren't usually drafted that high, but I figured if we're drafting a kicker, he's going to be really good for us," Burrow said this week. "Then I met Evan and you kind of know how a kicker is going to perform based on how he reacts and interacts with people in the locker room. All the kickers can kick it and put it through the uprights, but it's really how you handle the intense situations that's going to really make or break your reputation as a kicker." McPherson survived the friendly ribbing from his new teammates and dished it back himself, showing the Bengals he was ready for the NFL. But nothing has been more intense — and no performance has been better than McPherson has done so far in the playoffs. He has been perfect on kicks through three games, making four field goals in each win and delivering walk-off kicks on the road the past two weeks to beat the Titans and the Chiefs and send the Bengals to the Super Bowl. "He's been everything that we expected him to be and and then some," special teams coach Darrin Simmons said. "But his mental makeup is fantastic. It's exactly what you're looking for in that position." McPherson's 12 field goals so far are two shy of Adam Vinatieri's record from the 2006 postseason and he already has as many four field-goal games in the playoffs as any player ever, tying the record Vinatieri set in his 24-year career. McPherson's 12 field goals from at least 50 yards are the most in a single regular season and playoffs combined, and his three makes from long range in the playoffs are two shy of Vinatieri's record. Longtime NFL kicker and CBS kicking analyst Jay Feely said the only postseason he would put ahead of McPherson's is what Vinatieri did in the 2001 season when he made "the greatest kick of all time," a 45-yarder in the snow to force overtime against the Raiders. Vinatieri then made a 23-yarder to win that game, and a walk-off 48-yarder to beat the Rams in the Super Bowl. But McPherson is doing this as a rookie under the bright playoff lights. "A little bit of it is he doesn't know what he doesn't know," Feely said. "So he's just out there having fun. He hasn't had the big misses. He did have the one game against Green Bay where he missed, but he was able to overcome that. "That's what defines great NFL kickers is their ability to overcome failure, to not allow it to deter him. That's the point this season where your entire rookie year could go off the rails and it could make you not be confident in yourself and your swing starts to change, especially when you're a draft pick." McPherson missed three field goals in his first five games, including two in an OT loss to Green Bay in Week 5. He even memorably celebrated one of those misses as if he had made a game-winner. But he has nailed 35 of 37 field goals since then, validating the scouting report Simmons got from his former kicker Shayne Graham, who coached McPherson in college at Florida. "He talked to me a lot about what Evan's makeup was and how confident he was without being cocky, and that's an important differentiation to make," Simmons said. "You want these guys to have short-term memory that if good or bad, that they live to perform in the next kick. The most important kick is not the last kick, it's the next kick." The Bengals have marked McPherson's winning kicks the past two weeks with Tweets, saying "THAT'S WHY YOU DRAFT A KICKER!" But Feely said he doesn't expect McPherson's success to lead to a run on kickers going in the draft. He said determining which kickers have the fortitude to succeed like McPherson and which ones will flame out like Tampa Bay 2016 second-round pick Roberto Aguayo is nearly impossible to know. "I think it's really hard to draft a kicker and be successful," Feely said. "I think it's difficult for a personnel department to be able to look at a guy no matter where he played, no matter what level, and determine if he has the ability mentally and the mental makeup to come into the NFL to succeed."



Bengals' Evan McPherson (2) jumps into the arms of Kevin Huber after kicking a field goal to win the AFC. **REED HOFFMANN/AP**

MOTORING

COURANT.COM/CLASSIFIED/AUTOMOTIVE



Auto journalist Emme Hall and her extensively modified 2001 Mazda MX-5 Miata on Jan. 11 in Yucca Valley, California. BRANDON PAVAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES PHOTOS

‘THE BEST BANG FOR YOUR BUCK’

Auto industry people have driven all, but Miata keeps them smiling

By **Jim Motavalli**
The New York Times

Emme Hall, an auto journalist, loves to go off-roading, and she also loves Buddy, her 2001 Mazda MX-5 Miata sports car. Normally these two loves would be star-crossed, but not in Hall’s case. The Miata (one of two she owns) is happiest away from the pavement: It’s lifted to give the normally low-slung roadster 10 inches of ground clearance and has a beefed-up radiator to cope with hot trail days, a skid plate to protect the vulnerable undercarriage, a row of rally lights, a skimpy bikini top for sun protection and huge 27-inch tires. Despite the stock 1.8-liter engine, producing a modest 142 horsepower, it can and does get airborne.

Buddy has more than 130,000 miles on the odometer. Hall’s day job includes racing in events like the Baja 1000 and Mint 400 (as well as the Rebelle and Gazelle rallies), then writing about the experience in outlets like CNET Roadshow.

Taking Buddy off the beaten path, even if it results in broken axles, is what she does for fun. Hall, who lives in Yucca Valley, California, is one of a large group of auto industry people — executives, analysts and journalists — who, having driven everything else, buy and enjoy Mazda Miatas.

The little cars combine affordability with clever engineering, dependability and driving fun, they say — even at low speeds. Miata values have been rising, too — especially for the first, so-called NA generation of model years 1990 to 1998 — but hardly into Porsche or Ferrari territory. Classic-car insurer Hagerty estimates that a fully restored 1990 Miata is worth \$29,800.

“The best part of Buddy is that he makes everyone smile — they leave notes on him when I go for gas,” said Hall, who also has a 178-horsepower 2004 NB (second-generation) Mazda-speed Miata with a turbocharger.

“Miatas are simple, even the new



The stripped-down door panel of Hall’s 2001 Mazda MX-5.

ones,” she said. “There’s not a lot to interfere with your driving. I can wind my Miata out just going from one traffic light to another. Plus, they’re cheap — I don’t like spending a lot of money on a car.”

Hagerty CEO McKeel Hagerty explained the appeal. “The Miata is the signature car in the recent evolution of the car world,” he said.

“More than 1 million have been built, and you can track them or just cruise,” he added. “Miatas offer the best way into vintage racing. They’re incredibly reliable, and they hold value well.”

Gregor Hembrough, head of Polestar North America, chose a 2002 Miata as daily transportation when he worked for Volvo in Goteborg, Sweden, in the early 2000s.

“An MX-5 isn’t the obvious choice as a daily driver for someone residing in Sweden,” Hembrough acknowledged. “However, for me, the lure of a pure sports car was too strong to overcome. For autumn and winter, the car had heated seats, a limited slip differential, a removable hardtop and studded snow tires.”

He added, “For spring and summer, I enjoyed countless long evenings with the top down and the music up. It was a sad day when I returned to the U.S. and the car went on to a new home.”

Owners tend to drive their Miatas rather than merely admire them as garage ornaments. Hembrough put 19,000 miles on his over three years of ownership.

Stephanie Brinley, principal analyst for the Americas in IHS Markit’s automotive division, is on her second Miata in Troy, Michigan. To tackle Michigan winters, she throws snow tires on — even putting the top down sometimes if the sun is out.

“My first Miata was a 1998 I bought gently used with only 1,500 miles on the odometer,” Brinley said. “I was replacing an Acura Integra GS-R, which is a pretty sporty car, and I wanted something that would be just as much fun but still in a reasonable price range. After 15 years, I got tired of having to take the Miata’s hardtop on and off every year, and bought a 2012 NC with the power retractable hardtop.”

“It remains the best bang for your buck,” she added. “The new Corvette is a wonderful machine, but it’s bigger and more expensive and not as good as the Miata to use as an everyday car. I always smile when I drive my Miata, even after owning it for years. It’s such a well-balanced little thing.”

Chris Nelson, a former senior editor at Automobile Magazine who now edits Drool (for dog owners) and Iron & Air (about motorcycles), is an ex-Miata owner. But he made sure his separation from Gracie, the silver 1991 car he inherited from his father, was as dramatic as possible.

“It was a nice car, with the speakers in the headrests that let me listen to books on tape, and I drove it for 15 years,” said Nelson, who lives in Long Beach, California. “I loved that car, but I was doing a lot with motorcycles, and I needed a truck.”

“After my father died, my mom was having a hard time, so when she turned 60 I took her on a 2,000-mile road trip in the Miata around California, from Hermosa Beach up through Big Sur,” he continued. “Then I pulled off the right front fender and sent it to a jewelry maker — who made a bracelet and a ring as remembrances for my mother. Then, in 2018, I found another fender and sold the car.”

After attending the press introduction of the third-generation NC, Perry Stern, formerly an editor at MSN Autos and now at AutoNXT, decided he had to own a Miata.

“Ultimately,” he said, “I convinced my wife I needed something more fuel-efficient than the 2004 Ford Explorer I was driving. I found a used 2006 Miata — the first year of the NC — with only 47,000 miles in 2014.”

Stern, who lives in Sammamish, Washington, drives the car sparingly (it’s at 58,700 now), but — you guessed it — “it still brings a smile every time I take it out for a drive,” he said. “Even if I’m not driving it, it makes me happy to look in the garage and see it there. I expect to own it until the day I die.”

Tesla posts record earnings, says it won’t produce new models in 2022

Associated Press

DETROIT — Tesla Inc. on Jan. 26 posted record fourth-quarter and full-year earnings as deliveries of its electric vehicles soared despite a global shortage of computer chips that has slowed the entire auto industry.

Although the company predicted it would be able to build 50% more vehicles than it made last year, CEO Elon Musk said the chip shortage would slow the

company from rolling out any new models in 2022. That means another delay for the Cybertruck pickup, which was originally scheduled to go on sale last year. Musk also said Tesla isn’t yet working on a promised \$25,000 small electric car, but it will.

“We have enough on our plate right now, quite frankly,” he said.

And Musk said the company is looking at building additional factories and will offer an update

on locations later in the year.

The Austin, Texas, company made \$5.5 billion last year compared with the previous record year of \$3.47 billion in net income posted in 2020. Musk said the annual profit pushed the company’s accumulated earnings since its 2003 inception into profitable territory.

Musk said factory output was constrained last year as the company focused resources on modifying

vehicles and manufacturing to deal with the chip shortage and other supply-chain problems that will persist this year. A lot of engineering work and factory tooling are underway to produce the delayed Cybertruck, Semi and a new Roadster, which he said he now hopes to be ready for production next year.

Tesla delivered a record 936,000 vehicles last year, nearly double the 2020 figure.



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP



The 2022 Lexus LX 600 Santa FE. LEXUS

AUTO REVIEW

The 2022 Lexus LX 600 is the best Toyota Land Cruiser yet

By Larry Printz
Tribune News Service

Want a new 2022 Toyota Land Cruiser SUV? Well, you can't have one. Toyota decided to not bring the new one stateside because its annual sales numbers didn't justify the cost of federalizing it. So, you'll have to settle for a 2022 Lexus LX 600, which is a Land Cruiser with elitist airs. It employs the same TNGA-F platform used on the redesigned Land Cruiser, Toyota Tundra and forthcoming Toyota Sequoia.

"Just by virtue of the vehicle being fundamentally based on the new Land Cruiser, I think we have a very credible argument to Toyota Land Cruiser customers who are looking for the next generation to consider Lexus," said Vinay Shahani, vice president of Lexus Marketing during a recent interview. Offered in ascending Standard, Premium, Luxury, F Sport, and Ultra Luxury models the LX 600 wears a familiar look, albeit updated with thin, crisply designed lighting offset by a truly gargantuan spindle grille that lacks a frame, making it appear even larger. In contrast, the back of the vehicle is tastefully tame, spelling out the brand name and featuring visually connected taillamps.

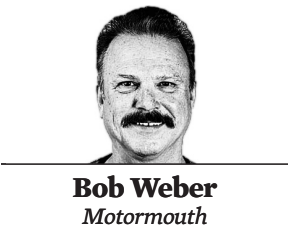
2022 Lexus LX 600

Base price: \$88,245
Engine: 3.5-liter twin-turbocharged DOHC V6
Horsepower/Torque: 409 / 479 pound-feet of torque
EPA fuel economy (city/highway): 17 / 22 mpg
Fuel required: Premium
Length/Width/Height: 200.6/W: 78.4/H: 74.6 inches
Ground clearance: 7.87 — 8.27 inches
Cargo capacity: 11-71 cubic feet
Towing capacity: 8,000 pounds

Its handsome, dignified appearance quietly offsets the more outrageous front. Inside, it feels somewhat less claustrophobic than before, with quilted leather seats, along with wood and aluminum trim. It's appropriately upscale for a Lexus, but others offer more opulent cabins at this price. Still, the LX 600 has its share of special features, especially on the Ultra Luxury model. It's here where you'll find seating for four, with center consoles front and rear, along with a reclining rear seat with ottoman that folds down from the back of the front seat. There's also a rear seat monitor, good for watching movies and TV. It almost works. Adults can use it if they're under 6 feet tall, and the

monitors are great, but they aren't equipped for wireless headphones. The biggest change is the infotainment system, which has been totally redesigned. Drivers face an 8-inch digital instrument cluster, while a 12.3-inch infotainment screen and a 7-inch screen mounted below it for controlling climate and vehicle functions anchor the center stack. They prove far easier and more intuitive to use than the cumbersome system Lexus saddled its customers with for too many years. But the real performance most buyers want will come off-road, and that's where the LX 600 shines. It's body-on-frame platform feels like a real truck. Take it off-road and you'll notice just how large and wide this vehicle truly is, although it makes easy work of the most remote trails. The various cameras lend the driver a view of what can't be seen from the driver's seat. Ride quality is good for a truck, but you'd never call it posh. As you'd expect in a body-on-frame vehicle, pockmarked pavement can send shudders through the vehicle, but that's typical of the breed. Overall, the LX 600 provides all of the capability of a Land Cruiser but is dressed for a night on the town.

It is normal for engine to take time to warm up to ideal temp



Q: I own a 2017 Nissan Rogue that has 56,000 miles on it. Whenever the temperature gets below 25 degrees, the car won't upshift out of what seems like fourth gear until the engine warms up. Is this normal for this car? The dealer service person said to let the car warm up before driving and that is normal for that transmission. Of all the cars I've owned, I never had to do this. This is not a big problem, but it seems strange. The car sits outside. — A.F., Eagan, Minnesota
A: The engine must reach operating temperature before the catalytic converter can do its job. That point is referred to as closed loop. Until that time, emissions are untreated. Carmakers use every opportunity to get the system in closed loop and maintaining high rpms by delaying the transmission from shifting helps. Short answer? It is normal.

Q: My question: With all the cars that have been made, are being made and that will be made, how the heck do they avoid duplicating VIN numbers? — D.E., Westchester, Illinois
A: Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs) can tell you quite a bit about your car. The first group of three numbers and letters identify the county of origin. The number 1 is for US, 3 is for Mexico, S is for Germany, for example. The next group of numbers is usually the make name such as Ford. Skipping to



DREAMSTIME

the 10th position, letters B through Y indicate the model year from 1981 (the year NHTSA standardized the system) through 2000. Then numbers indicate the model year from 2010 through 2030. There's a cool chart on Wikipedia you may want to check out. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vehicle_identification_number

Q: I drive a 2016 Mazda CX-5 with 62,000 miles. I had the wheels rotated and when I drove it home, the first time I used the brakes at a stop sign, the steering wheel began to shake. It eventually resorted to normal as I drove further. What happened? — B.W., Chicago

A: Check the lug nuts. They should be snug. If they are tightened unevenly, a hub or rotor may be damaged. Gently drive back to the shop for inspection.

Q: My 2012 Dodge Grand Caravan has a unique method of bolting the battery cable to the battery. Can you please explain how to properly fasten the cable to the battery? Even the tech was baffled. — W.U., Tinley Park, Illinois
A: The nut closest to the battery terminal provides the clamping force.

Q: We have been changing the oil of our 2018 Honda CR-V whenever the on-dash indicator tells us. We started to take the car to a local mechanic instead of the dealer. He states the indicator oil change interval is too long and recommends every 5,000 miles. They also recommend flushing and cleaning prior to placing the new oil due to the oil being too dirty. What is your opinion on the oil change interval and the flushing and cleaning? — G.R., Barrington, Illinois
A: Unless an engine has been so neglected that there appears to be tar on the dipstick, I wouldn't even consider flushing the engine. Modern motor oil is a miracle of chemical technology. Follow the carmaker's schedule.

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.

FACT #341

The folks who brought us Reddi-wip whipped cream had another brainstorm in the 1960s: Reddi-Bacon.



10 Things You Might Not Know About Nearly Everything contains a plethora of tidbits and trivia that will appeal to everyone, from history buffs to sports fans to foodies. From lighthearted topics such as misspellings and extreme eating, to serious subjects such as WWII and prison, this book leaves readers brighter and wittier than ever before.



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- FACT #84**

A cardigan worn by a man is sometimes called a mandigan.
- FACT #147**

When someone uses chitchat, noises, or mannerisms to distract or mislead an opponent during poker or another game, it's called "coffeehousing."
- FACT #178**

Genuphobia is the fear of knees.
- FACT #238**

Actress Marilyn Monroe colored her hair using a shade of blond called dirty pillow slip.
- FACT #279**

Before Sir Thomas More was beheaded in 1535, he moved his lengthy beard aside, saying it "had never committed any treason."
- FACT #302**




Tweety Bird, the animated Looney Tunes character, was originally pink. But censors complained that Tweety looked naked, so animators gave the bird yellow feathers.
- FACT #408**

Joe Charbonneau, a Belvedere, Ill., native, who played outfield for the Cleveland Indians in the early '80s, used to open beer bottles with his eye socket and drink beer through a straw in his nose.
- FACT #459**

When actor Clint Eastwood ran for mayor of Carmel, California, in 1986, a major issue was ice cream. Town leaders had banned the sale of ice cream cones, incensing Eastwood and his supporters. They won and overturned the ordinance.

WEATHER

SATURDAY






SUNRISE NOON SUNSET

Partly to mostly cloudy in the morning, mostly sunny in the afternoon, breezy. Northwest wind at 10 to 20 mph.

HIGH 26°
LOW 5°

SUNDAY






SUNRISE NOON SUNSET

Sunny and very chilly.

HIGH 29°
LOW 18°

MONDAY






SUNRISE NOON SUNSET

Mostly cloudy and very cool, afternoon rain or snow showers and evening snow showers are possible.

HIGH 39°
LOW 29°

TUESDAY






SUNRISE NOON SUNSET

Becoming partly sunny and very cool.

HIGH 42°
LOW 23°

WEDNESDAY







SUNRISE NOON SUNSET

Partly sunny and very cool.

HIGH 43°
LOW 26°

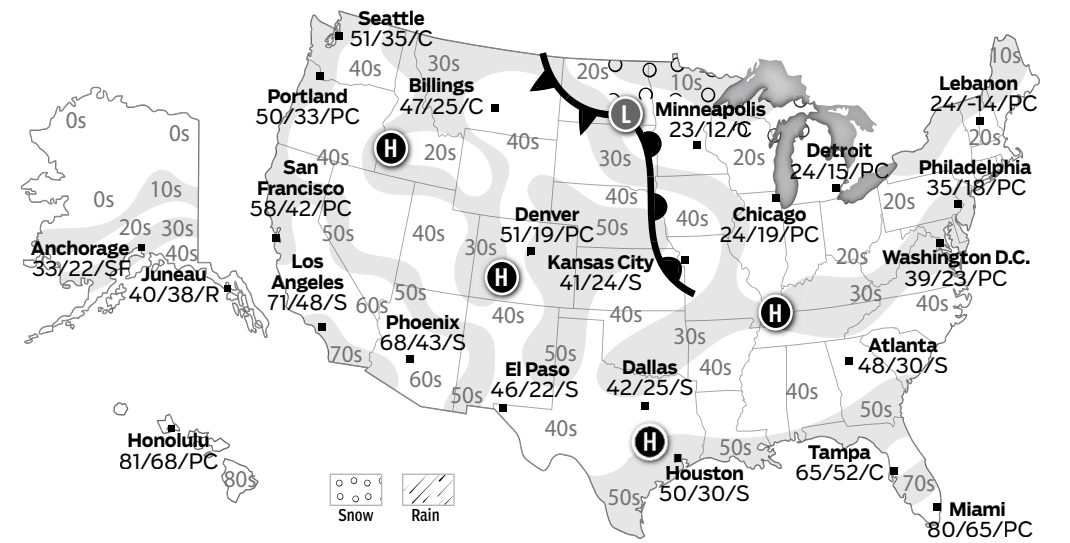
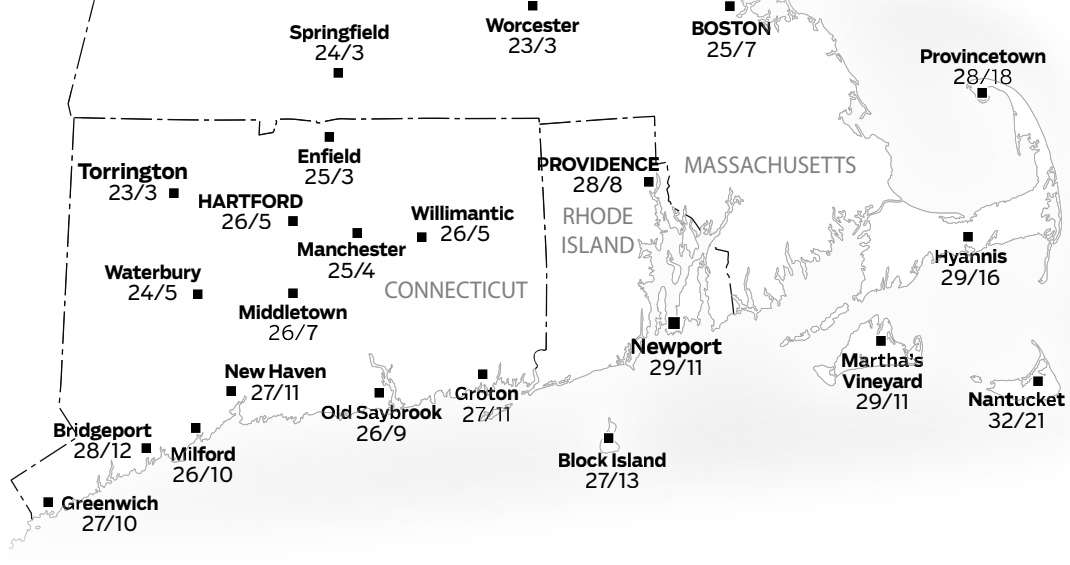
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YOURCAST



OUTLOOK

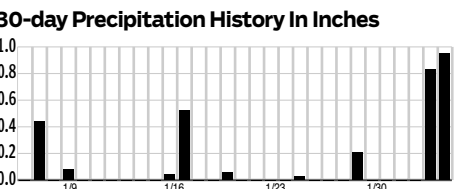
January had an average temperature of 24.5 degrees in the Greater Hartford area, which was 2.6 degrees below normal. There was 1.83 inches of precipitation and that was 1.45 inches below normal. In the snow department, 14.2 inches fell and that was exactly normal. Bridgeport had an average temperature of 28.1 degrees and that was 3.3 degrees below normal. There was 3.07 inches of precipitation which was just 0.11 inches below normal. 20.8 inches of snow fell and that was 12.3 inches above normal. This weekend will be fair with below normal temperatures.

-Gary Lessor

ALMANAC

Precipitation In Inches	Total	Normal
Yesterday (by 7 p.m.)	1.37	0.10
Month to date	1.79	0.42
Total this year	3.62	3.70
Snowfall In Inches		
Yesterday (by 4 p.m.)	0.0	0.6
Total this year	18.4	28.7

Precipitation, temperature at Windsor Locks



Tides	High	Low	Temp.
N.L. State Pier	12:06 a.m. 12:25 p.m.	6:41 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	39°
Saybrook Jetty	1:17 a.m. 1:36 p.m.	7:34 a.m. 7:53 p.m.	37°
Connecticut River at Portland	4:00 a.m. 4:19 p.m.	11:20 a.m. 11:39 p.m.	
Madison	1:36 a.m. 1:57 p.m.	7:47 a.m. 8:06 p.m.	36°
New Haven	1:56 a.m. 2:17 p.m.	8:11 a.m. 8:30 p.m.	35°
Stamford	2:00 a.m. 2:21 p.m.	8:25 a.m. 8:44 p.m.	36°


River Stage at Hartford: 5.87 feet at 5:30 p.m.			
Boating Weather	L.I. Sound W	L.I. Sound E	B. I. Sound
Wind	PCloudy	PCloudy	PCloudy
Seas	NW, 15-20	NW, 10-20	NW, 10-20


Air Quality Forecast For Today


Good 17	Low 2	8°
Air Quality Today	Ultraviolet Index Today	Wind Chill Today


	Today	Tomorrow
Sunrise	6:59 a.m.	6:58 a.m.
Sunset	5:10 p.m.	5:11 p.m.
Moonrise	9:36 a.m.	9:58 a.m.
Moonset	10:21 p.m.	11:26 p.m.

Moon Phase

 First Feb 8

 Full Feb 16

 Last Feb 23

 New Mar 2

AROUND THE WORLD

Today's forecast in cities not included in the maps above:

NEW ENGLAND										WORLD										LONDON									
Bangor	21	-6	PC	Baltimore	35	16	PC	Nashville	37	20	S	San Juan	80	71	R	Budapest	50	27	PC	Madrid	93	75	T						
Burlington	16	-6	PC	Bismarck	39	10	C	New Orleans	50	34	S	Tucson	66	37	S	Buenos Aires	75	59	T	Mexico City	63	49	PC						
Caribou	11	-10	SF	Boise	33	17	PC	New York	29	17	PC					Cairo	63	49	PC	Milan	81	68	SH						
Concord	25	-5	PC	Buffalo	16	8	PC	Okla. City	46	24	S					Cancun	81	68	SH	Montreal	81	64	PC						
Montpelier	14	-12	PC	Charleston	55	34	PC	Omaha	48	26	S	Amsterdam	46	43	SH	Dubai	81	64	PC	Moscow	48	37	PC						
Mt. Wash.	2	-15	PC	Cincinnati	24	17	PC	Orlando	63	54	SH	Athens	59	43	S	Dublin	48	37	SH	Nassau	45	30	R						
Portland	26	0	PC	Cleveland	23	17	PC	Pittsburgh	22	11	PC	Bangkok	93	73	PC	Edinburgh	45	37	R	New De	34	30	R						
Woods Hole	30	11	PC	Indianapolis	53	44	C	Raleigh	46	22	S	Barbados	83	70	S	Helsinki	34	30	SN	Paris	64	57	PC						
NATION										WORLD										LONDON									
Albany	23	-5	PC	Jacksonville	53	44	C	St. Louis	33	24	S	Beijing	39	23	S	Hong Kong	64	57	PC	Prague	45	37	PC						
Albuquerque	43	22	S	Las Vegas	62	43	S	Salt Lake City	42	22	PC	Beirut	62	53	C	Istanbul	45	37	PC	Rio de J	93	75	T						
Atlantic City	33	9	PC	Miami Beach	77	69	PC	San Antonio	51	31	S	Berlin	45	37	C	Jerusalem	48	43	R	Rome	50	27	PC						
				Milwaukee	22	21	PC	San Diego	69	47	S	Bermuda	71	63	PC	Johannesburg	72	61	SH	Seoul	93	75	T						
				KEY: S Sunny, C Cloudy, PC Partly Cloudy, R Rain, SH Showers, SN Snow, SF Snow Flurries, T T-storms											SINGAPORE														
																				SINGAPORE									

THURSDAY'S LATE HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

BOYS BASKETBALL

CCC-East
ENFIELD 78, SOUTH WINDSOR 49
SOUTH WINDSOR (4-10): Hakim Montgomery 2-4-9, Ben Brochu 6-1-16, Ty Casey 1-0-2, Colby Carr 1-2-4, JP Dargati 1-4-6, Anthony DeCiantis 3-3-10, Joey Bemis 1-0-2. Totals 15-14-49.
ENFIELD (4-9): Kaden Birkett 11-1-23, Josiah Whaley 5-0-11, Nick Valente 1-0-2, Fritz-Carly Andre 5-0-10, Isaiah Plummer 5-0-14, Joel Schmidt 0-1-1, Alex Herron 4-2-10, Tighe Thebodeau 3-0-6. Totals 34-3-78.

SW	5	15	15	14	- 49
E	15	18	22	23	- 78

Note: Birkett had a double-double with 12 rebounds, 3 assists, 2 blocks. Andre and Herron both had 8 rebounds.

CCC-Inter
NEWINGTON 65, MIDDLETOWN 57
MIDDLETOWN (9-4): Chace Petgrave 6-1-15, Matt Steuerwald 3-0-9, Timothy Vaughters 1-0-3, Elijah Wilborn 8-3-19, Marshall Butler 2-4-9, Dariyon Drake 1-0-2. Totals 21-8-57.
NEWINGTON (7-6): Nick Gagliardi 0-9-9, Trey Guest 4-2-10, Noah Tharaldson 3-2-8, Sean Hurley 3-9-17, Gavin Grey 3-4-10, Freddie Martinez 3-2-8, Avery Mickens 1-0-3. Totals 17-28-65.

M	17	9	22	- 57
N	8	17	19	21 - 65

CRAL
ACHIEVEMENT FIRST 72, UNIVERSITY 45
ACHIEVEMENT FIRST (7-4): Sadiki Darling 3-5-11, David Hinds 5-0-11, Rodrick Pearson 7-0-14, Dontey Tanksley 3-0-6, Jeremy Accoff 1-0-2, Deivone Tanksley 7-5-20, A. Edole 3-2-8. Totals 29-12-72.
UNIVERSITY (9-3): Yousif Abdelgadir 2-1-6, Chauncey Reid 3-0-6, Nate Torres 2-1-5, Ka'Ron Wright 1-0-2, Qaasim Ali 1-0-2, Sam Dzwonchky 1-0-3, Emmanuel Ikechukwu 4-0-8, Na'Zaire Lindsey 1-0-2, Sean Kupstas 1-0-2, Shalik Ceasae 3-3-9. Totals 19-5-45.

AF	14	20	17	21 - 72
U	13	12	9	11 - 45

SCC
XAVIER 50, HAMDEN 45
XAVIER (8-6): Colby Ciampi 3-0-6, Vik Vakati 4-4-14, Anthony Parker 9-1-21, Aidan Driscoll 2-5-9, Mark Schoonmaker 0-0-0. Totals 18-10-50.
HAMDEN (5-11): Emanuel Boles 5-0-11, DeAndre Coardes 3-0-8, Caleb Harris 2-0-5, Elijah Holder 4-1-9, Derrell Redd 5-1-2. Totals 19-2-45.

X	12	14	10	- 50
H	20	3	18	4 - 45

ECC
ST. BERNARD 63, BACON ACADEMY 38
ST. BERNARD (14-1): Cedrick Similien 6-2-16, Amyre Gray 3-3-10, Tyson Wheeler 3-0-9, Devan Williams 4-1-10, Odin Malz 1-2-4, Corbett Brassaw 1-0-2, Eli Borbon 1-0-3, Jake Weidner 1-0-3, Sherm Adams 2-0-6. Totals 22-8-63.
BACON ACADEMY (8-7): Sam Blumberger 1-0-3, Nate Harasimowitz 3-0-6, Ryan Claffey 1-5-7, Luke Grimord 1-0-2, Elijah Black 2-0-5, Quinn Johnson 5-1-11, Matt Lizotte 1-0-2, Kyle Bragdon 1-0-2. Totals 15-6-38.

SB	25	18	11	9 - 63
BA	7	9	14	- 48

Others
WINDHAM 90, WINDHAM TECH 81 (OT)
WINDHAM TECH (11-3): Dezmen Gaston 3-0-9, Daniel Toce 2-2-8, Alex Johnson 2-0-4, Brody Belanger 11-1-29, Dylan Desautels 1-1-3, Danny Meikle 0-6-6, Joey Johnson 9-2-22. Totals 28-12-81.
WINDHAM (8-6): Zachary Robinson-Smeyer 0-2-2, Jayden Villafane 2-0-5, Malcolm Hunter 8-7-29, Anthony Green 4-0-8, Travis Mangual 7-10-28, Isaiah Mangual 7-4-18. Totals 28-23-90.

WT	19	15	25	18	4 - 81
W	17	16	17	23	- 90

Note: Johnson scored his 1,000th career point and had a double-double with 14 rebounds.
AMISTAD 62, INNOVATION 23
AMISTAD (8-3): Bennett Scott 4-0-10, T'hmiri Reddick-Gist 4-1-10, Aden Goffe 4-1-9, Arion Robinson 2-4-8, Rodney Cook 4-2-10, Shemar Schuler 0-1-1, Raheem Callum 3-0-6, Eveyon Pearse 1-0-2, Brandon Hicks 2-0-4. Totals 24-9-62.
INNOVATION (4-9): Amir Bolden 2-0-6, Warlin Franco 1-0-2, Lebron White 1-0-2, Nae'Shaun Roberson 2-0-4, Angel Maldonado 1-0-2, Jayden Newell-Kemp 1-0-2, Amari Cruz 2-1-5. Totals 10-1-23.

A	17	22	13	10 - 62
I	7	4	0	12 - 23

TOLLAND 60, SUFFIELD 43
TOLLAND (3-10): Nathan Bowes 5-0-10, Mitchell Enman 7-2-18, Cullen Rublewski 4-2-13, Matt Taylor 1-0-2, Gavin Bagnall 4-1-9, Joey Keane 3-0-8. Totals 24-5-60.
SUFFIELD (9-6): Ryan Lewis 3-1-9, Nick Van Cott 0-2-2, Tyler Lewis 1-0-2, Jack Pixton 1-0-2, Michael Coggins 7-9-24, Nick Sattan 2-0-4. Totals 14-12-43.

T	25	7	21	7 - 60
S	8	14	16	- 43

LEWIS MILLS 54, LITCHFIELD 39
LITCHFIELD (9-5): AJ Quesnel 0-1-1, Ben Mwanza 2-0-4, JT Gostkowski 1-2-4, Travis Lipinsky 1-0-2, Tommy Gostkowski 8-2-18, Harrison Barnes 1-0-3, Cole Karpicki 0-2-2, Jonathan Hotchkiss 2-1-5. Totals 15-8-39.
LEWIS MILLS (6-7): Jon Schibi 5-3-16, Charlie Joiner 1-3-5, Connor McAttee 2-1-6, Colby Cables 5-0-11, Logan Cowger 1-1-3, Brice Waldron 5-0-10, Connor Evans 1-0-2, Jacob Hall 0-1-1. Totals 20-8-54.

L	2	12	13	12 - 39
LM	13	10	16	15 - 54

ROCKVILLE 70, MLC 32
MLC (1-9): Alec Lorenzo 2-0-6, Trey Moses 2-0-5, Jarell Deer 3-0-6, Zamar Gibson 2-1-5, Jordan Mills 1-0-2, Alex Grice 4-0-8. Totals 14-1-32.
ROCKVILLE (7-8): Fin Ross 1-0-2, Jeneil Powell 1-1-4, Weston Labrecque 2-2-6, Jayden Tate 4-1-11, Cam Washington 2-0-4, Dylan Resendes 6-2-16, John Ryan 5-0-11, Derek Albert 1-0-3, Brenden Fautaux 1-0-2, Eric Montez 3-0-7, Cam McLean 1-0-3, Amir Knighton 0-1-1. Totals 26-7-70.

M	10	6	7	9 - 32
R	21	14	17	18 - 70

COVENTRY 64, CIVIC LEADERSHIP 51
CIVIC LEADERSHIP (2-11): Kyon McCray 4-5-14, Noah Hicks 7-3-23, Jayden Gist 0-1-1, Donovan Brown 1-0-2, Chris Norton 2-0-4, Javier Negron 1-1-3, Khemont Mitchell 1-2-4. Totals 16-12-51.
COVENTRY (7-7): Aiden Jeamel 5-4-15, Ryan Sendahl 2-1-6, AJ Roelis 3-0-6, Vinny Locricco 6-3-16, Joey Pezzino 3-0-6, Wyatt Wendry 4-0-10, Nate Cortier 1-0-2, Gavin Covell 0-3-3. Totals 24-10-64.

CL	13	16	9	13 - 51
C	16	21	14	13 - 64

GIRLS BASKETBALL

CCC-South
BELLING 50, MALONEY 36
BERLIN (7-6): Jenna Wenzel 2-6-10, Janessa Yacoinello 1-0-9, Clare McGeever 5-2-14, Emma Ellison 1-0-2, Alivia Halkias 3-0-7, Kaliee DeMaio 3-2-8. Totals 18-11-50.
MALONEY (11-2): Amal Bahili 2-2-7, Gracey Massicolette 4-1-11, Nadia Berrios-Lugo 2-0-4, Jaylice Rosario 5-4-14. Totals 13-7-36.

B	13	14	11	12 - 50
M	7	10	9	10 - 36

CCC-West
CONARD 44, AVON 20
CONARD (8-7): Callie Cosgrove 5-2-12, Emily Knowles 5-3-13, Leah Williams 1-0-2, Tatiana Harrison 2-1-5, Sophie Lynch 2-0-4, Courtney McPhee 2-2-6, Emilia Santiago 1-0-2. Totals 18-8-44.
AVON (4-11): Sophie Mango 2-2-6, Lindsey Arigoni 0-0-0, Erin Geary 0-0-0, Adi Standish 4-2-10, Sophia Diabella 2-0-4. Totals 8-4-20.

C	8	14	11	11 - 44
A	6	1	9	4 - 20

CCC-Inter
ENFIELD 50, FARMINGTON 29
ENFIELD (15-1): Alyssa Hosig 1-0-2, Taylin Byers 2-0-4, Mia Dalry 0-1-1, Alyssa Rossignol 5-1-11, Sydney Marshall 2-1-5, Amyah Rosado 9-0-21, Megan Marcotte 3-0-6. Totals 22-3-50.
FARMINGTON (11-5): Daria Fournier 2-0-5, Emily Sanchez 1-0-2, Abby Bertoletta 1-0-2, Brooke Jones 0-1-1, Suzy Scheer 1-0-2, Abby Finn 1-1-3, Reshma Palanivel 1-0-3, Sarah Bertoletta 2-0-4, Anna Loughman 0-1-1, Avery Anderson 3-0-6. Totals 12-3-29.

E	12	9	20	9	—	50
F	7	6	6	10	—	29

Note: Marcotte had 13 rebounds, 5 blocks, Rosado had 7 assists, 4 steals and Brossignol had 7 rebounds.

MIDDLETOWN 61, WETHERSFIELD 32
MIDDLETOWN (13-2): Shalyn Smith 4-4-13, Jada Bryant 3-6-12, Tyah Pettaway 8-1-19, Jahne Carre-nard 0-1-1, Tajahnae Brock 0-2-2, Shadade Bushay 4-0-8, Kalila Torres 1-2-4, Bryonna Bell 1-0-3. Totals 12-3-29.

22-15-61.
WETHERSFIELD (1-14): Maia Berdebes 1-0-2, Vanessa Venditti 3-0-7, Bella Tomaino 0-1-1, Alexia Grenier 2-0-4, Allison Wagner 1-0-2, Ella Alger 2-0-6, Mackenzie Mori 4-0-10. Totals 13-1-32.

M	17	13	13	18 - 61
W	10	3	10	9 - 32

SOUTH WINDSOR 42, PLATT 31
PLATT (8-8): Vianna Alcantara 3-2-8, Kamani White 0-1-1, Kaylani Cruz 0-1-1, Khrystina Campbell 6-1-13, Antwanette Tann 3-2-8. Totals 12-5-31.
SOUTH WINDSOR (4-8): Anna Matus 7-4-19, Lexie Wheeler 3-1-9, Anna Kim 1-0-2, Olivia Petgrave 1-1-3, Reagan Heafey-DeAngelis 1-0-3, Maria Gallely 2-1-5, Katie Dunn 0-1-1. Totals 14-9-42.

P	2	5	10	14 - 31
SW	18	8	7	9 - 42

NCCC
CANTON 41, SUFFIELD 33
SUFFIELD (6-7): Jordan Dion 2-7-2, Lexi Mailloux 2-0-5, Cami Bosco 4-0-8, Ava Toomey 1-0-2, Lily Johnson 3-2-11. Totals 12-4-33.

S	3	10	11	9 - 33
C	9	6	14	12 - 41

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Anytime seafood stew is ENDLESSLY RIFFABLE

By David Tanis
The New York Times

When I'm cooking at home, I usually don't have a recipe at hand. Often, I'm cooking by feel, like confidently noodling on the piano without sheet music. But, of course, you do need practice before you can ad-lib.

This menu features dishes that can be prepared using that approach, although recipes are supplied. Many home cooks are already comfortable with customizing recipes or using them just as a starting point. But sometimes they really aren't necessary. Relying on memory and paying close attention to the ingredients' attributes can get you there.

Take this fennel and radicchio salad. It's an easy dish to riff on. Say you've got two fine fennel bulbs from the market and a lovely head of radicchio. Imagine the possibilities.

A simple preparation requires just seasoning the sliced fennel with salt and pepper, adding lemon juice, a little grated garlic and flavorful olive oil, then tossing with torn radicchio to coat. (You could also use curly endive or speckly Castelfranco in place of radicchio.) For a more complex version, you could make a zippy vinaigrette with lemon, garlic and oil, then add chopped anchovy (a little or a lot) and perhaps a dab of Dijon mustard, since the combo of sweet fennel and bitter radicchio pair well with an assertive dressing.

A typical fish stew, as served in the south of France, is another example of a dish you can take liberties with. No matter the selection of seafood available, the method remains the same: An onion is softened in olive oil, before saffron, garlic, thyme, a touch of tomato and a speck of hot pepper are tossed in. It then all blooms together to concentrate the flavors. Then fish stock or water is added to build a broth and seasoned well. It should taste bright and full-flavored before the fish and shellfish go in. Clams and mussels, if used, give it a layer of brininess.

A good quantity of sliced Yukon Gold potatoes makes the stew more substantial (and stretches it, if you are low on fish and have extra mouths to feed). The potatoes also absorb a lot of flavor: I'd venture to say you could leave out the fish sometime and call it a potato stew.



Anytime fish and shellfish stew and a radicchio-fennel salad are good examples of recipes you can take liberties with — they are endlessly riffable. DAVID MALOSH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Anytime fish and shellfish stew

Makes: 4 to 6 servings
Total time: 45 minutes
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, diced (about 2 cups)
Salt and pepper
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 bay leaf
1 large thyme sprig
Pinch of crumbled saffron threads
Pinch of red pepper flakes or a whole small dried red pepper
Splash of dry white wine (about ¼ cup)
1 ½ cups chopped tomato, canned or fresh (about 2 medium)
4 cups fish stock or water
2 pounds yellow-fleshed potatoes, such as Yukon Gold, sliced about ¼-inch thick
6 medium cherrystone clams, scrubbed
1 pound boneless, skinless cod or halibut, cut in 1-inch pieces
1 pound mussels, cleaned
1. Heat olive oil over medium in a large, heavy-bottomed soup pot or Dutch oven. Add onions and stir to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, until softened and lightly colored, about 10 minutes.
2. Stir in garlic, bay leaf, thyme, saffron and red pepper, and cook for 1 minute. Add wine and tomatoes, and simmer 1 minute. Add stock and bring to a slow boil over medium. Add potatoes and a good pinch of salt. Adjust heat to a brisk simmer. Cook with lid ajar until potatoes are just done, about 10 minutes. Taste broth — it should be well seasoned — and adjust as necessary. (You can do this up to an hour ahead of time.)
3. As the broth simmers, add the clams and cook for 5 minutes, covered with the lid ajar. Add cod and mussels on top, cover and cook until the mussels are done, 4 to 5 minutes. Turn off heat and let the stew steep for 5 to 10 minutes, until the mussels and clams open. Serve in wide soup bowls.

Fennel and radicchio salad with anchovy and egg

Makes: 4 to 6 servings
Total time: 15 minutes
3 medium fennel bulbs, topped and trimmed, fronds reserved for another use
Salt and black pepper
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice (from 1 small lemon)
¼ teaspoon grated lemon zest
1 small garlic clove, grated or smashed to a paste
1 medium head radicchio (about 12 ounces)
3 large eggs (cooked 8 minutes), cooled in ice water and peeled
4 to 6 anchovy fillets, preferably the best quality you can find, rinsed, patted dry and halved
1. Using a sharp knife or a mandoline, slice fennel crosswise ⅛-inch thick. Place slices in a wide salad bowl, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Add olive oil, lemon juice and zest, and garlic. Toss everything together, coating the fennel well. Taste for salt and adjust. (This can be done up to 30 minutes ahead.)
2. Remove and discard any wilted outer leaves of radicchio. Separate tender leaves, tearing large ones into smaller pieces.
3. To finish the salad, quarter the eggs. Add radicchio to the salad bowl and sprinkle very lightly with salt. Toss together radicchio and fennel, coating everything well. Garnish with quartered eggs. (Yolks should have a moist center.) Top eggs with the anchovy fillets.



Wine-braised chicken proves that a deluxe meal does not have to be difficult, time-consuming or all that expensive. DAVID MALOSH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

MAXIMUM RICHNESS

Celebrate simply — even on a weeknight — with creamy, wine-braised chicken

By Melissa Clark
The New York Times

With today’s seemingly endless supply of practical weeknight chicken recipes, it can be easy to forget that, once upon a time, chicken was considered a delicacy.

Thumbing through my copy of “The Escoffier Cookbook,” I was struck by the opulence attached to the bird. It starred in dozens of recipes — wrapped in puff pastry, drenched in cream, swathed in sheets of aged ham, stuffed with truffles, basted with Madeira. There wasn’t a sheet-pan dinner in sight.

And all those recipes gave me exactly the inspiration I needed to create a creamy, wine-braised chicken dish that is deluxe enough for a special meal, though not that much more complicated than what I’d make on any given Tuesday.

The first thing is to find some really good chicken. If you can get it from a farmers’ market, all the better. Otherwise, look for air-chilled, antibiotic-free and preferably organic chicken at the supermarket. It will be more expensive than a standard bird, but going big on chicken is still less of a splurge than buying many other meaty options.

Then there are the mushrooms in

the recipe, which can be as extravagant as you like. Creminis, shiitakes and white buttons will work perfectly, although if you’re going all out, specialty mushrooms like king, hen-of-the-woods and chanterelles add an even more intense flavor. Or use a combination: A few earthy black trumpets will go a long way in the pot.

You’ll also need some wine for the sauce. Common kitchen wisdom dictates adding a splash from the bottle you’re planning to drink at dinner. But I usually use wine left over from dinner the night or two before.

When sealed and stored in the fridge, leftover wine is perfectly fine for cooking, and you can use any (dry) variety for this adaptable braise. That means white, red, rosé or even a sparkling or orange wine, if that’s what you’ve got.

Like all braises, this one gets better after sitting overnight. Prepare it up until the moment when you would stir in the crème fraîche, then stick it in the refrigerator for up to two days. Warm it over low heat on the stovetop, or in a 350-degree oven for 20 to 30 minutes. Then stir in the crème fraîche and garnishes.

Serve it with crusty bread, polenta, rice or a heap of buttered noodles, with more crème fraîche on the side for maximum richness — and maximum joy.

Wine-braised chicken with mushrooms and leeks

Makes: 4 servings
Total time: 1 hour
1 (3 ½-pound) chicken, cut into 8 pieces (or use 3 ½ pounds bone-in chicken parts)
2 teaspoons kosher salt (Diamond Crystal), plus more as needed
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more as needed
4 garlic cloves
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 cup thinly sliced mushrooms (preferably specialty mushrooms, such as king, hen-of-the-woods, chanterelles or black trumpet, or a combination)
2 large leeks (4 cups), halved and thinly sliced into half-moons (use white and light green parts)
2 to 3 rosemary sprigs
¾ cup dry white wine (or use a dry red or rosé)
½ cup crème fraîche, plus more for serving if desired
2 tablespoons chopped chives
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest, plus more for serving
½ cup finely chopped fresh parsley, leaves and tender stems
1. Pat chicken dry with paper towels. Season all over with 1 ½ teaspoons salt and the black pepper. Finely grate, pass through a press or mince 2 garlic cloves. Set aside half the grated garlic for finishing the dish. Rub the rest all over

the chicken pieces. Set aside the chicken while preparing the other ingredients.
2. In a Dutch oven over medium-high heat, combine 1 tablespoon oil and 1 tablespoon butter. When the butter melts, add chicken in batches and cook until browned on both sides, 4 to 6 minutes per side. If the pan dries out, add a little more oil as needed. Transfer browned chicken to a plate.
3. Add remaining tablespoon each oil and butter to the pan. Once the butter melts, add mushrooms and cook undisturbed until well browned on one side, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir and cook for 1 minute longer.
4. Thinly slice 2 garlic cloves. Reduce heat to medium, and stir in sliced garlic, leeks and a large pinch each of salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until leeks are tender and golden brown, 7 minutes. Add rosemary and wine to the pot and let simmer, scraping up the browned bits, until liquid reduces by half, about 1 minute.
5. Nestle chicken, skin-side up, into the pan and pour in any accumulated juices from the plate. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, covered, until chicken is cooked through, 25 to 35 minutes.
6. Transfer chicken to a serving platter and tent with foil to keep warm. Pluck the rosemary sprigs from the pot. If the sauce looks thin, turn the heat to medium-high and let simmer until it thickens slightly, 2 to 5 minutes. Stir in the remaining grated garlic, the crème fraîche, chives and lemon zest. Taste sauce and add more salt if needed. Spoon sauce over the chicken and top with parsley, more lemon zest and a dollop of crème fraîche, if you like, and serve.

Pancakes are delicious — any way you dress them

By Sahara Bohoskey
TheKitchn.com

The combination of sweet and salty is always a good idea. These pillowy pancakes take on a hint of earthy aroma from peanut butter. (Our cross-tester confirmed that the taste is subtle and kid-approved.)

I like to enjoy them with salted toasted peanuts to balance out the sweetness. But fresh-cut rounds of banana with chocolate chips — and maple syrup or maple butter — would be also be perfect.

This pancake batter is made in a specific order, with flour being last to ensure the peanut butter, butter and eggs specifically emulsify. It gives you plenty of time to keep mixing until you achieve that goal.

Adding flour to the batter last ensures a fluffy and airy pancake and, because you’re only using one bowl, reduces mess. Mixing the peanut butter, melted butter and (room temperature) eggs first allows for proper emulsification.

And adding the leavening during this step (instead of with the flour) promises good distribution without over-mixing — something I learned from one of my cooking idols, Deb Perelman of The Smitten Kitchen. I love this trick and apply it to all of my baking escapades. You should, too.

Keep cooked pancakes warm in an oven heated to 200 degrees while you finish your batch of pancakes.



These peanut butter pancakes are the perfect blend of sweet and salty. CHRISTOPHER TESTANI/THEKITCHN.COM

Peanut butter pancakes

Makes: 8 to 10 pancakes (4 servings)
2 large eggs
4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter
⅓ cup smooth peanut butter
¼ cup granulated sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
⅓ cup whole milk
¾ cup all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon neutral oil, such as peanut oil or refined coconut oil, plus more as needed
Maple syrup and chopped toasted peanuts, for serving (optional)
1. Let 2 large eggs sit on the counter until room temperature, about 1 hour.
2. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 200 degrees.
3. Melt 4 tablespoons unsalted butter in a large nonstick frying pan over medium-high heat. Transfer to a large bowl and reserve the pan for later (do not wash).
4. Add ⅓ cup smooth peanut butter, ¼ cup granulated sugar, 2 teaspoons baking powder, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, the eggs and ⅓ cup whole milk to the bowl and whisk until well-combined. Add ½ cup whole milk and whisk to combine. Add ¾ cup all-purpose flour and stir with a wooden spoon or flexible spatula until just combined. Do not overmix — some lumps are OK.
5. Heat 1 tablespoon neutral oil in the reserved frying pan over medium-low heat until shimmering. Add ¼-cup portions of the batter to the pan, cooking 4 at a time, and spread the batter into 3-inch-wide rounds. Cook until bubbles appear on the surface of the pancakes and the bottoms are golden, 2 to 4 minutes. Flip and cook until the second side is golden, 1 to 3 minutes more.
6. Transfer to a baking sheet and keep warm in the oven. Repeat with the remaining batter, adding more oil to the pan as needed. Serve warm with maple syrup and chopped toasted peanuts, if desired.

12 under \$20: Life’s too short for bad bottles

By Eric Asimov
The New York Times

It’s a bleak, cold January day, and as I look out the window at a solitary, huddled figure waiting for a city bus, I want nothing more than the hot split pea soup simmering on my stove and a good bottle of wine to go with it.

“Good” is the operative word. As the Australian wine impresario Len Evans put it eloquently in what he called his “Theory of Capacity,” life is too short to waste it on inferior bottles. That is true no matter the price.

While good, distinctive wines can be found at every price, the odds of finding great values in everyday wines are most in your favor if you commit to spending \$15 to \$25 a bottle.

Recently I went on a digital shopping spree at New York wine shops, looking for great values under \$20. These bottles are not from the most heralded appellations, and some are made with wholly obscure grapes. The best values come from discoveries rather than from pursuing the tried-and-true.

Given the fragmented nature of American wine distribution, you will not find these bottles in any single store, and probably not in any other city. But you should be able to find some of them and plenty of substitutes for those you can’t find.

Ask for advice at the best wine shop near you. Good merchants can rise to the challenge of offering a good Bourgueil other than the one I suggest, or another sub-\$20 California cabernet.

This column includes the alcohol content. It can be useful, giving clues about the style of the wine, whether it may contain residual sugar, taste ripe and fruity or fall more on the austere side.



TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Domaine Guion Bourgueil Cuvée Domaine 2019, 12.5%, \$14.99: Compared with the many producers who have taken up organic farming in the past decade, Domaine Guion has been doing it seemingly forever, since 1965. This Bourgueil, made of cabernet franc, demonstrates how good a relatively simple wine can be when produced conscientiously. It’s pure and unmediated, with direct flavors of red and dark fruits, and a touch of well-integrated bell pepper.

Château du Petit Thouars Chinon Les Georges 2019, 13.5%, \$16.99: Loire reds are perennially among the best values in wine, even as other reliable bottles, like cru Beaujolais, creep up in price. This Chinon is a little more structured than the Bourgueil, with discernible chalky tannins. Yet it’s immensely likable, with earthy aromas and flavors of flowers, herbs and red fruits.

Melsheimer Mosel Riesling Handwerk 2020, 10.5%, \$19.99: This excellent family estate farms biodynamically, primarily on perilously steep

slopes in the Mosel Valley in Germany. Handwerk is Melsheimer’s entry-level wine, a terrific introduction to its luminous, pure, energetic rieslings. The 2020 in particular is lovely. It’s light-bodied, but full of peachy, earthy, mineral flavors and it tastes quite dry, though it has a touch of residual sugar.

Gioventù Chianti 2019, 13%, \$15.99: Chianti Classico is the best-known zone in the Chianti region and generally produces the highest quality wines, but the extended area also has a lot to offer. Michael Schmeltzer, the man behind the excellent Monte Bernardi Chianti Classicos, also makes this wine from organically farmed grapes grown in the greater Chianti area. It’s bright with zippy acidity, simple and easy to enjoy.

Valravn Sonoma County Chardonnay 2020, 14.2%, \$19.99: California chardonnay has the reputation of being extravagant, oaky and overblown, but this wine is the antithesis, subtle rather than excessive. Valravn obtains grapes from all over Sonoma. For this bottle they come from three areas:

the Sonoma Coast, the Russian River Valley and the Petaluma Gap. It’s rich yet balanced, with inviting flavors of apples, herbs and sweet corn.

Gulp/Hablo Spain Verdejo/Sauvignon Blanc 2020, 11.5%, \$19.99, 1 liter: This is an orange wine, a white made using red wine techniques. The juice of the grapes is macerated with the skins, which provide a tinge of color and a mild rasp of tannin. The grapes, half verdejo and half sauvignon blanc, are grown organically and the winemaker is the excellent Juan Antonio Ponce of Bodegas Ponce, one of the best producers in Manchuela in eastern Spain. The wine is textured and aromatic, fresh and refreshing with flavors of citrus and sauvignon blanc pungency.

Ultraviolet California Cabernet Sauvignon 2020, 14.5%, \$17.99: Samantha Sheehan makes chardonnay, pinot noir and a variety of rosés under the label POE Wines. She uses the Ultraviolet label for cabernet sauvignons like this one, a pure California expression of ripe fruit

that is nonetheless well balanced. This is a juicy, fresh, voluptuous wine that never goes over the top. If you like fruity California cabernets, this is an excellent bottle.

Ver Sacrum Los Chacayes — Valle de Uco Monastrell 2018, 13%, \$19.99: This is the first time I’ve tried Ver Sacrum’s monastrell and it’s lovely, though lighter and easier-going than I would have expected. Under its French name, mourvèdre, the primary red grape of Bandol, the wines can be tannic beasts. But Ver Sacrum produces this wine with semicarbonic fermentation, a method common in Beaujolais and in many natural wines, yielding a juicy, aromatic, immediately pleasing wine.

Domaine Faillenc Sainte Marie Corbières 2019, 14%, \$16: Some of my favorite wines from the Languedoc region of southern France have a sort of wild, rustic quality that contrasts with the often overly polished nature of many modern wines. This Corbières is a good example of what I mean. It’s made of equal parts syrah, grenache and

cinsault, a typical regional combination, and it’s lively, fruity and floral, with clear herbal notes and just enough tannins to offer a friendly bite. Perfect for a beef stew or a hearty soup.

Akutain Rioja Cosecha 2018, 12.5%, \$17.99: This is the first Rioja I’ve tried from Akutain, which farms around 16 acres in the Rioja Alta region. Cosecha means unaged, and this wine essentially was fermented in fiberglass vats and bottled, capturing the juicy immediacy of the tempranillo fruit. It’s spicy and earthy, easy to drink and deliciously refreshing.

Puech Redon Vin de France Pour de Vrai Pétillant Naturel 2020, 11%, \$19.99: Puech Redon is an estate in the Languedoc region of southern France. After Cyril Cuhe took over management from his father, he began farming organically in 2008. More recently, with the help of the excellent Rhône producer Éric Texier, he has begun making wine naturally, without adding sulfur dioxide, an almost universally employed stabilizer and antioxidant. This white pét-nat is made of red grapes, primarily cinsault, with 15% syrah. It’s tangy, easy, simple and refreshing, like biting into a piece of fresh fruit.

Domaine de l’Enchantoir Saumur Blanc 2019, 13%, \$17.99: I love chenin blanc from the Loire Valley, yet the most famous appellations, like Vouvray and Savennières, are increasingly difficult to find for less than \$20. Fortunately, Saumur Blanc, in the Anjou region, still offers good deals like this bottle from Domaine de l’Enchantoir, where the Brunet family farms roughly 40 acres organically. It’s inviting and richly textured yet light-bodied, with lovely floral and citrus flavors.



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A taste test of nonalcoholic wine and spirits

By Jenn Harris and
Stephanie Breijo
Los Angeles Times

There are many reasons why someone might want to attempt a dry January. Maybe you indulged a little too much during the holidays. Or you're just looking to cut back on alcohol in the new year. Whatever the reason, there are more options than ever for nonalcoholic beverages.

Demand is growing. The global nonalcoholic drinks market is forecast to grow from \$923 million in 2020 to more than \$1.7 trillion by 2028, according to marketing research company Fior Markets. An October report in The Drinks Business, relying on data from NielsenIQ, said online sales of the "low-and-no category soared with a 315% increase ... in the latest 12 months."

The following is a taste test of 14 nonalcoholic beverages including wine, spirits, aperitifs and a couple of drinks that don't fall into any traditional category.



BORTONIA/GETTY

Wines

Surely Pinot Noir, \$26.99

This may be the fanciest fruit juice cocktail on the market. The pinot noir grapes do lend a bit of spice, but the dominant flavors are grape juice and cherry. But while the wine may taste like fruit juice, it's actually bone dry. hisurely.com

Surely Rosé, \$24.99

This tastes less like a rosé and more like a tropical party in a glass, which isn't necessarily a bad thing, though it might not scratch that rosé itch. The inclusion of guava and passion fruit juices makes for a tart and tangy sipper, and the light carbonation might fool the tongue for a split second, but it's more tropical fruit juice than wine. hisurely.com

Noughty Organic Alcohol-Free Sparkling Chardonnay, \$21.99

Both the nose and the flavor were on the milder side, with slight bready notes and just a touch of apple. If you put ice cubes in your glass of Champagne and they melted, this is what it would taste like. It was dry though, and a lot more like sparkling wine than apple cider.

drinknolow.com

Spirits

DHOS Gin Free, \$24.99

Is spicy water a thing? It is now. While there is an initial wallop of juniper, pine and citrus, the flavor fades quickly into nothingness. All you're left with is heat. But not the warming sensation typically associated with straight alcohol. Heat as in hot chile pepper hot. Yes, it tastes like spicy water. This not-quite-gin product is a better gin substitute when mixed with tonic. dhosspirits.com

Lyre's Dry London Spirit, \$35.99

Meant to replicate the potent flavor of a dry, unadulterated gin, Lyre's take on a classic London-dry style gets the job done in shockingly authentic fashion. It's far too bitter to sip or shoot on its own, but a quality tonic and a wedge of lime draw out the botanicals and mellow its more overt stringent qualities for one of the most spot-on flavor replications of our taste test. lyres.com

Spiritless Kentucky 74, \$35.99

If you're just looking for that warm, caramelly bourbon smell,

this is the bottle for you. But it was lacking in body and flavor and mostly tasted like watery apple juice with a splash of vanilla. spiritless.com

Ritual Rum Alternative, \$28.99

There was more viscosity and body to this spirit, which gave it an almost syrup-like quality. The flavors were bold with bursts of vanilla, spice, orange and toffee. And it was warming with a slight burn, similar to what you'd experience if you were drinking actual rum. Of all the spirits we tried, this was the closest to the real thing. We even tried it in a daiquiri, and it tasted like a daiquiri. ritualzeroproof.com

Free Spirits "Tequila," \$37

One of the few no-ABV spirits to nail that burn in the throat, Free Spirits' approximation of reposado tequila is surprisingly successful and a serious delight to sip — though it's been specifically designed to mix well in a margarita. Vanilla, caramel and agave tones provide some of its sweeter notes, while a smokiness from white oak and a peppery burn give it that signature tequila bite going down. Some of its

burn got buried when we used it in a paloma, but it still carried through; you might want to pour it with a heavy hand. drinkfreespirits.com

Aperitifs

Ghia, \$33

This Tabasco-colored drink does what an aperitif is designed to do. It's a bitter, herbal concoction that whets the appetite. The combination of yuzu, lemon balm, Riesling white grape, elderflower, orange, rosemary, fig and ginger ended up tasting overwhelmingly like grapefruit peel. I thought it was delicious. drinkghia.com

Wilfred's Bittersweet Orange & Rosemary, approx. \$25

Meant to replicate Campari, this Wilfred's aperitif shares the same citrusy bitterness and vibrant red-orange hue of the iconic Italian liqueur. But while Campari's notes are more pith, cherry and clove, Wilfred's incorporates more vanilla tones, rosemary, rhubarb and a whole bouquet of warm baking spices. It's a little sweeter than its alcoholic counterpart (but by no

means sweet), and still bound to get the job done in a no-ABV spritz or negroni. wilfredsdrinks.com

For Bitter For Worse Eva's Spritz, \$28

When we purchased this bottle we were told it's like a cider, but as it turns out, it's marketed as more of an Italian aperitivo. Really, it's neither. Eva's Spritz marches to its own beat: It's carbonated, effervescent and juice-forward, and tastes like a shrub got dragged through a garden of rhubarb, citrus, grapes and beets. There's a bitter edge, largely due to the roasted dandelion root, which helps balance all the sweetness of that juice. forbitterforworse.com

Miscellaneous

Seedlip Grove 42, \$32

This is the lemon-infused water they serve you post-massage at a nice spa. The company says that the "sophisticated, bright, citrus blend" includes Mediterranean orange, lemon peel, lemongrass and ginger. All I got was lemon peel. It's refreshing, but you can make it yourself. seedlipdrinks.com/en-us/

AMASS Riverine, \$40

One whiff of this noncategorical spirit and it's clear there are more than a dozen botanicals involved: The juniper, lemon peel, rosemary, thyme, coriander, sumac and a certain green-olive brininess are almost overwhelming on first sip, but Riverine mellows as it goes, eventually falling somewhere between a botanical gin and the most herba-ceous spa water of your life. This is an easy sipper; simply add soda water and a couple of ice cubes and you're good to go. amass.com

Optimist Smokey, \$35

"Smokey" is the name of the game, but the flavor note is far from overpowering in this complex and woody sipper. At the shop, it came recommended as a mezcal substitute, but there's really no category for this spirit: Smoky lapsang souchong tea forms the flavor baseline, while botanicals, spices and herbs such as ginger, bergamot and geranium brighten it up.

One-pot pasta dinner is full of salty seafood flavor

America's Test Kitchen

Shrimp is the most popular seafood in the United States. These slightly sweet, mild-flavored crustaceans are full of interesting science. Take a deep dive into these fascinating facts.

Shrimp change color when they cook

Most raw shrimp are a gray-black color. But when you cook them, they turn pink. Why the color change? Shrimp contain a pigment called astaxanthin that is released when the shrimp reach about 120 degrees. Bonus fishy fact: Salmon have pink flesh because they eat shrimp and krill, a shrimp relative that contains the same pigment.

Shrimp come in lots of sizes

There are about 2,000 species of shrimp around the world, and humans eat around 300 of them — from common white-leg shrimp to beautiful royal red shrimp. Some species are harvested



This one-pot meal takes less than an hour to make. AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN

when they're super tiny, dried and used in all sorts of dishes, including soups, salads and stir-fries. On the other hand, black tiger shrimp can grow as long as 13 inches.

The shell is full of flavor

Shrimp shells contain proteins, sugars and compounds called glutamates and nucle-

otides, which have a savory umami taste. If you cook shrimp shells, their proteins and sugars undergo a special chemical reaction that gives them even more flavor. But peeling shrimp is a lot of work. In this recipe, we use peeled shrimp and add another ocean ingredient — clam juice — to boost this dish's salty seafood flavor.

One-pot garlicky shrimp pasta

Makes: 4 servings
1 pound frozen peeled and deveined extra-large shrimp (21 to 25 per pound), thawed and tails removed
½ teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon plus ¾ teaspoon salt, measured separately
1 tablespoon plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, measured separately
6 to 8 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
3 cups water
2 cups chicken broth
½ cup clam juice
4 ½ cups medium pasta shells (12 ounces)
½ teaspoon grated lemon zest plus 2 tablespoons juice, zested and squeezed from 1 lemon
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
1. In a medium bowl, combine shrimp, pepper and ½ teaspoon salt. Stir until shrimp are evenly coated.
2. In a Dutch oven, heat 1 tablespoon oil over

medium-high heat for 2 minutes (oil should be hot but not smoking). Add shrimp to pot and spread in a single layer. Cook shrimp, without stirring, until edges turn pink, about 1 minute.
3. Stir shrimp and cook until pink all over, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Turn off heat. Transfer shrimp to a large plate.
4. Add garlic, red pepper flakes and the remaining 2 tablespoons oil to the pot. Cook over low heat, stirring often with clean rubber spatula, until garlic is just beginning to turn golden, 4 to 6 minutes.
5. Stir in water, broth, clam juice, pasta and remaining ¾ teaspoon salt. Increase heat to medium-high and cook, stirring often, for 12 minutes.
6. Continue cooking, stirring constantly and scraping the bottom of the pot, until pasta is tender and sauce is thickened, 3 to 8 minutes longer. Turn off heat. (Sauce will continue to thicken as it cools.) Stir in lemon zest and juice, parsley and shrimp. Let sit until shrimp is heated through, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve.

SERIOUSLY SIMPLE

This apple cherry custard crisp never goes out of style

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Fruit crisps might have been one of the first desserts recorded. Still, they never seem to go out of style.

Early Americans created fruit desserts with some very funny names like pandowdy or buckle. The simpler named fruit crisp is just a mixture of fruit on the bottom and a streusel layer on top. It certainly is easy to put together (peeling and cutting the apples is the most work you'll have to do).

This recipe is one of my most requested desserts. Sometimes I mix it up by using a combination of apples and pears or substitute dried apricots or cranberries for the cherries. This is just about foolproof for any cook.

This crisp is full of winter goodness with juicy apples and sweet dried Bing cherries. Most crisps



This is the essence of a modern comfort dessert. NOEL BARNHURST/TNS

Apple dried cherry custard crisp

Makes: 6 to 8 servings
1 cup dried cherries
6 medium apples, peeled, cored and cut into 1 ½-inch pieces (Golden Delicious, Fuji, Honey Crisp, Braeburn or Granny Smith will do)
½ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Zest of 1 lemon
For the custard:
2 eggs
1 cup creme fraiche
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
For the topping:
6 tablespoons brown sugar
¾ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup finely ground almonds
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon finely chopped lemon zest
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ cup melted butter
1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

2. Place the cherries in boiling water for 10 minutes to plum them. Drain and reserve.
3. In a mixing bowl combine the apples, cherries, flour, sugar, lemon juice and zest, and mix until the fruit is well coated. Transfer to a 9-by-12-inch greased gratin pan or baking dish. Press down the fruit with the back of a large spoon to make an even layer with no gaps. Place the pan on a parchment lined baking sheet.
4. Prepare the custard: In a medium bowl beat the eggs. Add the creme fraiche, vanilla and whisk until blended. Sift in the flour, whisking well to make sure the custard is smooth with no lumps. Set aside.
5. Prepare the streusel: In a mixing bowl combine the brown sugar, flour, almonds, salt, cinnamon, lemon zest and mix together. Add the vanilla and melted butter and mix with a fork until it becomes a soft dough.
6. Spread an even layer of the creme fraiche custard mixture over the fruit. Crumble the crisp mixture with your fingers evenly over the custard. Bake for about 55 minutes or until the top is golden brown and completely cooked through. Let rest 10 minutes and then serve. This can also be served at room temperature.